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THE HOME

OF THE

SMITH FAMILY

IN

PETERBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

1749-1842

BY JONATHAN SMITH

OF THE WORCESTER (MASSACHUSETTS) BAR.

CLINTON:

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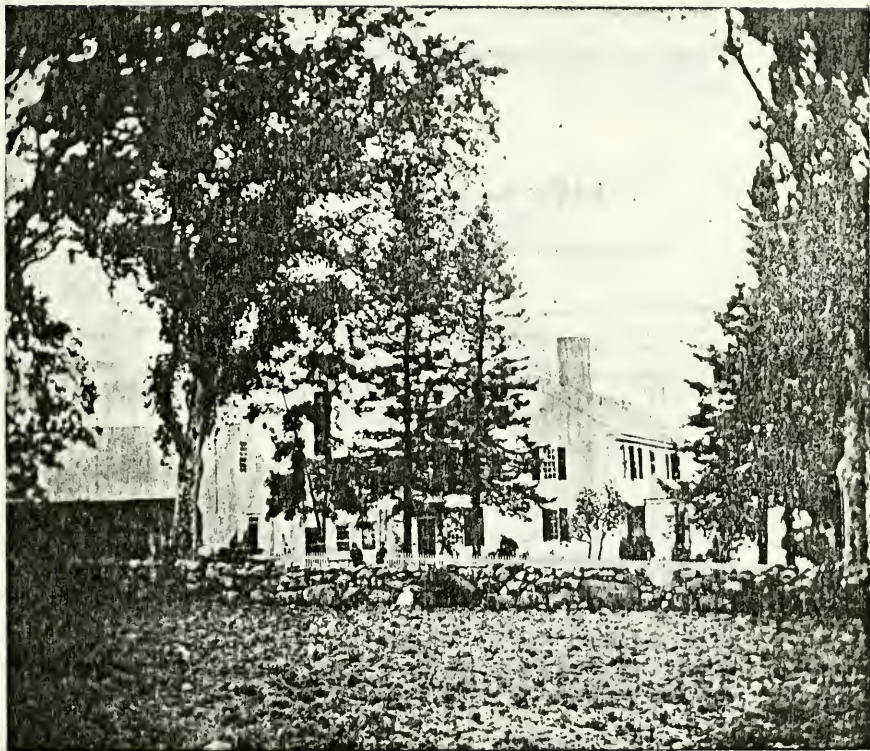
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THE FAMILY HOME.

VIEW FROM THE SOUTHEAST.

TAKEN IN 1864.

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*"Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead."*

— ST. JOHN.

*"His substance is not here ;  
For what you see is but the smallest part,  
And least proportion of humanity."*

SHAKESPEARE — HENRY VI.

*"Ever their phantoms rise before us,  
Our loftier brothers, but one in blood ;  
At bed and table they lord it o'er us,  
With looks of beauty and words of good."*

— OLD POEM.

*"This is the life of one of the forgotten millions. It contains no material for distinction, fame or long remembrance ; but it does contain the material and present the scene for a normal human development through mingled joy and sorrow, labor and rest, adversity and success, and through the tender loves of childhood, maturity and age. We cannot but believe that it is just for countless quiet, simple lives like this that God made and upholds this earth.*

— PRESIDENT ELIOT.





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## PREFACE.

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THE purpose of this book is to preserve, first, the known facts and traditions in regard to the founding and development of the old family home in Peterborough; and, second, all that can now be learned of its first two proprietors, William Smith and Jonathan Smith. It is not an attempt to say anything new, or convey any new impressions. Much of the matter has already been printed, some of it in books and family genealogies now out of print or rare, and some in fugitive newspaper communications, published years ago and long since forgotten. Much has also been extracted from old records and stray papers, liable to be lost or destroyed at any time, the extraordinary historical value of which is strangely overlooked by those having them in charge. From all these sources as well as from others I have drawn freely, and reference to them is made on the margins of pages where extracts from them are to be found.

The book is written for the family and not for the general public; hence no apology is offered for the detail with which the story is told. My aim has



been to present to the reader, as clearly as possible, a picture of William and Jonathan Smith as their neighbors saw and knew them, their mental and moral temper, their habits, their business, social and family life, with such outline of their public services as will enable their descendants to understand them and the scenes and influences which moulded their lives. No one feels more keenly than I how fragmentary and incomplete these sketches are, nor regrets more deeply that the work was not done a generation earlier by some one who knew them and could speak from personal knowledge and observation.

The materials for a satisfactory biography of either are very scant. Neither William nor Jonathan Smith left any diaries or letters — those mirrors of the mind in which are reflected the inmost thoughts, motives and aspirations of the writer, and constitute the key which unlocks his character. A few signatures to some old deeds are all the written memorials left behind by William Smith. The same is true of Jonathan Smith, except that of him we have his address at the centennial of 1839, fragments of two speeches in the Legislature and his report on the town library. Meagre as these are, they show something of his ways of thinking and his powers of observation and expression. To fully understand either, recourse must be had to the customs and



characteristics of the race to which they belonged—the Scotch-Irish, who settled the town. I have sketched at some length the salient traits of this people—their habits, their social customs, their deep interest in political questions, and their mighty zeal for religion. We cannot understand the settlers nor the history of Peterborough for its first hundred years without knowing the temper and race characteristics of these sturdy and enterprising immigrants.

Both William and Jonathan Smith were men of large public spirit, and were leaders in the political and religious events of their day in the town. In the absence of all written expression of their opinions upon the questions with which they had to deal, liberal extracts from the early history of the town have been inserted, in part to show their standing among their fellow-citizens, and in part to cast some light on the matter of what their opinions really were.

These are imperfect sketches of two of the “forgotten millions.” But I am not without hope that this little volume will be thought a contribution—though a humble one—to the history of the town. The story of any community, like the story of a nation, is, in the last analysis, but a record of the opinions, acts and character of its individual citizens. It is they who make its history; they are not only the exponents but the makers of that Public





Opinion which gives character and direction to all social and municipal affairs. And I venture the remark that if a similar work were done for the other early families that, taken together, they would make a history of Peterborough of great value to the future student of its early life and development.

In preparing the book I have been placed under the greatest obligations to Mrs. Nancy (Smith) Foster of Chicago, the last surviving child of Jonathan Smith, who, at the ripe age of ninety-two years, still retains a keen interest in all that concerns the town of her nativity, and whose long life of philanthropy and generous giving has afforded apt illustration of that benevolent and broad public spirit for which her father and grandfather were so justly distinguished. She has furnished many of the facts and traditions herein recorded, which have helped to no small extent to make up the picture of the old family home for its first hundred years in Peterborough.

To Mrs. Clara Foster Bass, and to my brother and sister, I am also deeply indebted for sympathy and encouragement in the prosecution of the work, as well as for material assistance in collecting and sifting the materials from which it has been written, and in revising the manuscript.

JONATHAN SMITH.

CLINTON, MASS., July 1, 1900.



## CHAPTER I.

### ROBERT SMITH.

ROBERT SMITH was born in 1681, in Moneymore, Ireland, which is near Lough Neagh, about twenty miles southeast of Londonderry, in the county of the same name. His father was James Smith, also of Ireland, but James Smith's ancestors came from Scotland, probably in the early part of the seventeenth century.

Early in the seventeenth century all "northern Ireland—Londonderry, Donegal, Tyrone, Cavan, Armagh, Fermanagh—passed at one fell swoop" into the power of the British crown. King James proceeded to people them with Englishmen and Scotchmen as he had before peopled Down and Antrim. In 1652 there was another large emigration from Scotland to Ireland. Both these migrations were from the Lowlands of Scotland.

It would seem from the family traditions that Robert Smith's ancestors must have come to Ireland



before 1652. Very probably they came with the large colonies that settled in Londonderry and the other northern counties under James the First, between 1609 and 1612. Nothing is known of their mental and moral characteristics except what may be inferred from the knowledge we possess of the race to which they belonged, nor do we know anything of Robert Smith's early life. He had some education, certainly he could read and write, and he had sufficient knowledge of arithmetic to enable him to transact business. His early life must have been full of privation and hardship, for he grew up amid the political and religious quarrels which laid waste large portions of Ulster and were particularly severe in certain parts of the county of Londonderry. He learned the trade of tanner and followed it in Money-  
 Genealogy of eymore before he came to America.  
 William Smith. In 1710 he married Elizabeth Smith of Money-  
 Genealogy of more. She was the daughter of "James  
 William Smith. Smith of England," whose ancestors were also Scotch. Her English mother and her English education account for the fact that her children spoke without the Scotch accent; they were the only settlers of Peterborough who did so. No traditions concerning her have been preserved, and beyond the  
 Genealogy of facts that she could read and write and  
 William Smith. was a member of the church in Money-  
 Genealogy of more, nothing is known.



The children of Robert and Elizabeth Smith, all born in Ireland, were as follows:

Genealogy of 1. John Smith, born 1715, died January  
William Smith. 28, 1801, at Peterborough, aged 86.

Printed Records "Purpose of marriage between John  
of Lunenburg, Mass. Smith of Peterborough and Mary Hark-  
ness of Lunenburg was entered this 11th day of  
August, A. D. 1753."

Printed Records "John Smith of Peterborough and Mary  
of Lunenburg. Harkness of Lunenburg were married  
October 2, 1753, by Rev. David Stearns, minister of  
Lunenburg."

Genealogy of 2. Sarah, born about 1716, died January  
William Smith. 31, 1814, aged 98, some supposed 100,  
years. She married before leaving Ireland James  
Bell, ancestor of Samuel and John Bell of Hooksett.  
Her second husband was William McNee, by whom  
she had no children. They lived for several years  
in Dublin.

3. Mary, born 1720, died December 29, 1799, at  
Peterborough, aged 79 years.

Printed Records "Thomas Morison of Londonderry and  
of Lunenburg. Mary Smith of Lunenburg were mar-  
ried by the Rev. Mr. David Stearns, minister of  
Lunenburg, October ye 2nd, 1739."

4. William, born 1723, died at Peterborough  
January 31, 1808.

There is reason to believe that they had other





children who died in Ireland, but all attempts to establish the fact by family or church records have been fruitless. It is not known whether the church to which they belonged in Moneymore still exists. No records of it can now be found.

Genealogy of William Smith. In the autumn of 1736, a party of Scotch Irish from Londonderry and the vicinity sailed from Ireland for America. The company landed at Boston, spent the winter at Lexington, and the following spring several of the families of which it was composed settled in Lunenburg.

Of this party were Robert Smith, his family, and one or more of his brothers. The brothers went to Virginia and all traces of them are lost, but Robert Smith was one of those who settled in Lunenburg. He brought all his family with him with the possible exception of Mrs. Bell, who, it is thought, came later; and some three hundred pounds in money, worth in our present currency about fifteen hundred dollars. November 6, 1738, he purchased of Nathaniel Sanderson a farm of fifty-four acres, divided into mowing, orcharding, tillage and pasture, with a small house and barn upon it, paying therefor £230 in "bills of credit." The deed is witnessed by Edward Hartwell, Benjamin Goodrich and Nathan Heywood, and was probably made in Worcester the same day. This farm is on a hill two hundred feet above the surrounding



country called in the deed "Barn Hill." It is situate in the northern part of Lunenburg, three miles from Townsend Centre and two miles from the village of Lunenburg. The northern boundary is the boundary line between Townsend and Lunenburg. The site commands a wide view of the surrounding country. The hill slopes to the east and south, and at its foot on the south side flows Mulpus Brook. The house in 1738 was a one-story frame dwelling. Both house and barn were torn down about thirty-five years ago, but the cellar-hole over which the house stood is still there, and the well, which was directly in front of the house, can still be pointed out. The fields about the old building site are still covered with orcharding. The soil at the time of Robert Smith's occupation must have been very productive; it is still fairly good.

There is nothing on record to show that Robert Smith ever added any land to his first purchase. During his fifteen years' ownership he stocked the  
Records of                farm with cows, oxen, swine, a horse,  
Lunenburg.              and possibly other live stock. In 1739, his taxes on the real estate were £9, and on the personal property £3.8s. His taxes increased yearly until 1747, when his real estate tax was £36. and his personal tax £17.6s.; in 1752 they were: real estate, £30.; personal property, £17.16s. In 1753, he was not taxed for any real estate but was assessed for



Worcester Co.     £100. in cash. He sold the farm February 24, 1753, to Samuel Hammond, for £213.6s. "lawful silver money." In both deeds—that of Nathaniel Sanderson to him and that of himself to Samuel Hammond—he is described as "a tanner." He is so referred to in Cunningham's manuscript history of Lunenburg. There is no direct evidence that he plied his trade during his ownership of this farm; nothing now to be seen on or about the place indicates it; but circumstantial evidence points strongly to the conclusion that he did. In the latter part of the last and the first half of the present century tanning was an important industry in the town, and there was a tannery not far from his house where the business was carried on for many years. A stream of water ran close to the foot of the hill and the surrounding forest abounded in hemlock trees, thus furnishing plenty of material; and that he occupied himself in tanning after his removal to Peterborough we know.

It does not appear that he took any part in town affairs while in Lunenburg. He never held any public office and his name does not once appear in the records of town-meetings between 1738 and 1753. An examination of the church records for the same period does not show that either he or his wife ever joined the church there, although June 24, 1737, Mrs. Smith received a certifi-

Genealogy of  
William Smith.



cate that she was a member in good standing of the church in Moneymore. It is probable that he also was a member of the same church, and it would appear that neither of them ever severed their connection with it.

He was past seventy when he removed to Peterborough. He lived with his son William until his death. All his children, save possibly his daughter Sarah, were then living in Peterborough, and he had no tie left to bind him to Lunenburg. Notwithstanding his advanced age his industrious habits still clung to him. Sometime between 1757 and 1760 he sunk four tanning vats in some low ground near the street road on the north side of his son William's farm. These vats became a part of the tannery afterward carried on by the two John Fields, father and son, and by the latter's son-in-law, A. A. Farnsworth. The tannery was in operation until 1870, when the business was definitely given up and it was abandoned.

The genealogies of the family state that Elizabeth Smith died September 28, 1757, at Lunenburg. It is too late to challenge this statement, coming as it does from members of the family at least two generations nearer the event than the writer. But there is some reason to doubt its correctness. Neither the church nor the public records of Lunenburg, the former kept by the Rev. David Stearns





and very full and complete, make any mention of her death or burial; and Robert Smith never paid any taxes there after he sold his farm in 1753. As we have said, all their children were then living in Peterborough, and they were in prosperous circumstances. Elizabeth Smith's burial at Lunenburg is not conclusive evidence that she died there, and it would seem more probable that they removed to Peterborough immediately after the sale of the farm in 1753.

Genealogy of Robert Smith died at the house of his  
William Smith. son William, January 14, 1766, aged  
eighty-five years. His grave is in the old burial  
ground on the street road near the site of the old  
meeting-house. It is at the west side of the yard,  
some distance southwest of the lot where lie so  
many of his descendants. The stone has the skull  
and cross bones above the name. Of the man him-  
self, his personality, his mental and moral make-up,  
not a tradition remains. The Lowland Scotch have  
been described as having bony, athletic frames,  
broad and high cheek bones, and weather-beaten  
countenances. They were radical in politics, stern  
and rigid in religion, tenacious of their opinions,  
alive to the necessity of education, industrious and  
economical in their habits of living, cold and austere  
in manner. We may assume that Robert Smith  
shared the political opinions of his neighbors and  
fellow emigrants, and that his political creed con-



sisted chiefly in hatred of tories and Catholics. We know that in religion he was a Scotch Presbyterian, and probably he was in full sympathy with the doctrines of that sect, and fully accepted the ways of God in dealing with men as they are set forth in its dogmas of Election, Foreordination and Everlasting Punishment. By industry and thrift he accumulated a property considerable in those days. The meagre details of his life which we possess indicates that the bread of idleness was never eaten at his table. That he was alive to that primal duty of a parent to his children, that is, to give them the best education his means afforded, there is good evidence. The intelligence and mental acquirements of his sons easily made them leaders in the community where their lot was cast.

It is upon the character, intelligence and sterling qualities of the men of whom Robert Smith was a fair type that the edifice of our New England civilization stands. A population made up of such men is as necessary to a great state as the statesman or military chief. The names of its individuals are never found on the page of history, and their work passes unnoticed; yet they are the only sure foundation upon which great institutions can rest securely.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE SCOTCH-IRISH.

THE Scotch-Irish who came to Londonderry, and probably those who came to Lunenburg also, were Lowland Scotch originally from Argyleshire. During their residence in Ireland they had intermarried to some extent with the English and Huguenots, but not with the Celtic Irish, whom they cordially disliked, but they preserved all the characteristics of the native Scot. Their descent from this stock and their purely Scotch traits and temper are strikingly shown by comparing Parker's description of them with the account given by Froude, in his life of Thomas Carlyle, of family life in the early home and neighborhood of the Seer of Craigenputtock. Ecclefechan is in Dumfries, which is one of the southern counties of Scotland as Argyleshire is one of the western. Froude gives a picture of the Scotch peasant in his own home, showing in strong relief his laborious life, his pinching poverty, his fiery temper, his moral fibre, of the "toughness and springiness of



Froude's Life and Letters of Thomas Carlyle. steel." "They were noted," he says, "for their hard sayings, and it must be said also, in their early manhood, for their hard strikings. They were warmly liked by those near them; by those at a distance they were looked upon as something dangerous to be meddled with." Carlyle himself, in speaking of his own father, thus unconsciously sketches the typical Scotch peasant in his mature years: "Sterling sincerity in thought, word and deed, most quiet, but capable of blazing into whirlwinds when needful, and such a flash of just insight, and brief natural eloquence and emphasis; true to every feature of it as I have never known any other." The racial identity is unmistakable.

They had suffered severely from religious persecution in Ireland, as well as from the systematic repression of trade and commerce by Acts of Parliament in favor of English and against Irish industries.

Parker's History of Londonderry. On the eve of the departure of the Londonderry emigrants in 1718, Rev. James McGregor preached to his flock a sermon in which he said their removal to America was for the four following reasons: "1st, To avoid oppression and cruel bondage. 2d, To shun persecution and designed ruin. 3d, To withdraw from the communion of idolaters. 4th, To have an opportunity of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience and the rules of the inspired Word."





Lunenburg in 1737 was one of the frontier towns of Massachusetts, but many of the little company settling there that year soon began to think of removing still further into the wilderness. The Scotch-Irish immigrants upon their arrival in America almost invariably pushed at once to the frontier, to the very outposts of civilization and beyond. This is true of those settling in Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia and Carolinas. A spirit of daring, shall we say a love of fighting, as well as a desire to better their material condition, led them on. From the beginning of the sixteenth century the Scot had wandered over Europe in search of adventure and gain. "As a rule," says Harrison, "he turned his steps where fighting was to be had, and the pay for killing was reasonably good. If English wars had made their country poor they had also made them a nation of soldiers."

The Scotch-Irish immigrants who came to America in the seventeenth century were men of vigorous mental characteristics and marked individuality. Their wills were strong, their intellectual powers good. Practical sagacity and piety, keen common sense, shrewdness and caution, honesty and tenacity of purpose were their special traits. Their tastes were simple, their mirth loud and boisterous. Their wit spared neither age nor idiosyncracies of manner and temper. If their usual demeanor was somewhat



stern and dignified, they had during their residence in Ireland absorbed no small measure of the Irish humor and love of fun, forming a combination neither purely Scotch nor purely Irish, partaking partly of the severe practical nature of the one and the impulsiveness and love of fun so characteristic of the other. Hence they were great practical jokers, and found objects of their mirth and wit in all ranks and social conditions of people about them. This sense of humor was a fortunate trait, for it saved them from the commission of many cruelties and excesses of which their Puritan neighbors were guilty; it lightened their cares and relieved to no inconsiderable extent the burdens of their hard lot.

They were a people conscious of their merits, self-reliant, always ready to assert themselves and defend their own rights or those of their neighbors. Blunt in speech, exercising their wit upon friend and foe alike, they were nevertheless hospitable and faithful, loyal friends, and kind and affectionate toward those who conciliated them. Their courage was of the highest order, and no vices so excited their scorn and contempt as meanness and cowardice.

But their pre-eminent trait was their strong loyalty to enlightened religious convictions, and to all the forms and duties which their religious faith imposed. They had a metaphysical turn of mind and were fond of religious controversy. Their Presby-



terian creed had been confirmed to them by the cruel massacres and extortions which they had endured both in Scotland and Ireland, and they came here to enjoy the privilege of worshipping God according to its forms and ceremonies, unvexed by the arbitrary exactions of kings and bishops. The Bible was their chief book. It was not only their "Book of books"—it was their romance, their poetry, their history as well as their inspiration and guide. It was read daily in the family, and a chapter from it followed by prayer was the first exercise of every meeting where serious business was to be considered. They found in it the articles of their creed abundantly confirmed by many proof texts; their sorrows were soothed by its comforting words and their hopes of a blissful immortality demonstrated by its glorious promises. It was the corner-stone of their political faith as well, and from its pages they built up those great ideas of personal responsibility in politics as well as in morals and religion which made them, when the Revolutionary War finally came, the foremost, the most formidable and unyielding of all King George's foes in the western world.

*Parker's History* In all their homes family prayers were of Londonderry. held both morning and evening. Both the shorter and the larger catechism of the Presbyterian Church were committed to memory and regularly recited by parents and children. The practice



of annual family catechising was strictly observed. The families to the number of eight or ten assembled according to appointment at some centrally located dwelling in the neighborhood; here the minister met them, and beginning with the youngest, carefully examined each individual in the articles of Christian faith and duty. Scripture proof texts were also required. The Bible was not only read but studied; long portions of it were committed to memory, and repeated at the visits of the minister or the church members with each other.

Their zeal for religion was not more than their interest in the cause of education. "It was the supreme ambition of the Scot," says Harrison, "to breed one son who should wag his pow in the pulpit." Their steadfast aim was to place religion on a basis of knowledge and thought. The school was established beside the church until the growth of the community required a subdivision of the territory into districts for the accommodation of all the people; and always as soon as their circumstances permitted they established classical high schools, academies and colleges. "They seem," says Mr. Greene, "to have furnished the principal schoolmasters of all the provinces south of New York prior to the Revolution, and it is a noteworthy fact that a large portion of the leaders in that movement in the lower middle and western

S. S. Greene's  
Scotch-Irish in  
America.





states received their education under men of this race. From them undoubtedly they caught an ardent love of liberty and increased glow of patriotism."

Of this race Robert and William Smith were fair representatives, and it was among such influences, hereditary and otherwise, that William Smith grew to manhood.



## CHAPTER III.

### WILLIAM SMITH—HIS EARLY LIFE.

Genealogy of WILLIAM SMITH, youngest child of  
William Smith. Robert and Elizabeth Smith, was born  
in Money more in 1723, and was therefore thirteen  
years old when his parents emigrated to America.  
We know nothing of his life or surroundings in his  
first home except that he had attended school, and  
Life of that his penmanship was so good as  
Judge Smith. to cause his schoolmaster to write of  
him—

“William Smith of Money mar  
Beats his master far and awar;  
I mean in writing,  
Not inditing.”

Judging from specimens of his writing which have  
been preserved, his teacher's praise could not have  
been undeserved. His handwriting was clear and  
legible to his latest years. In their school-days he  
was fond of telling his children of his early achieve-  
ments in chirography, and no doubt he stirred them  
to emulation, for they, too, all wrote good hands.



Genealogy of  
William Smith.

He is spoken of as "the best informed of the early settlers," and he must have had a, for those days, fair education; but probably most if not all of his schooling was obtained in Ireland. No records of Lunenburg remain to tell us of the schools there between 1736 and 1745. But he was fourteen years old when his father went there, and the situation was such as to require his active assistance in the support of the family. He probably acquired some knowledge of arithmetic and grammar, and his schooling had been sufficient to awaken a fondness for reading which he cultivated to the end of his days. Not the least of his good gifts to his children was this same thirst for knowledge, which was a marked trait of all his sons.

We know nothing definite of his history during the interval between the settlement of his father's family in Lunenburg and his own removal to Peterborough in 1749, but we may infer many things from what we do know of the circumstances and situation of the family, the conditions of life in the country of their adoption and the manners, customs and characteristics of the race to which they belonged. He staid at home and worked on his father's farm until he was of age. Probably his father's house was his home as long as he remained in Lunenburg.

The farm on "Barn Hill" was already cleared and fenced when Robert Smith bought it, and a part



of it had been set in orcharding; but all around was the primeval wilderness. In 1737 new settlers were rapidly clearing the forests and converting them into tillage and pasture; the log houses of the period were fast being replaced by frame dwellings; and farm buildings were being improved by the addition of sheds and barns. Tanning had begun in the town, so that there was a ready market for hemlock bark. Work was pressing, and of all these labors the boys performed their full share. New England farmers, whether living in new countries or old, have ever been firm believers in what Carlyle calls "the gospel of work," and the boys received practical instruction in it at an early age. Beside the ordinary work of the farm they helped cut the trees, clear the land and make it ready for its first seeding; they assisted in the erection and improvement of the buildings, the fencing of the fields and pastures, the construction and betterment of the highways; they cleared the tillage of stone. Each month brought its special work, and the round of toil was without a break from January to December.

Sunday indeed brought a change, but Sunday duties crowded the day as completely as the labors of the field and forest filled the week-days. The necessary work about the house and barn, attendance on the two religious services and the study of the catechism, in which old and young joined, left





little time for rest. The women were little behind the men in the amount of labor performed. They prepared the food, and this probably included grinding the corn and rye, of which for a long time their only bread was made; they made all the clothes of the family, beginning with the wool as soon as it was off the sheep's back and with the flax as soon as it was harvested. When out-of-door work was pressing they worked in the fields with the men. They assisted in the harvesting, and it is told of the wife of one of the first settlers that she had been known to dig sixteen bushels of potatoes in a day.

Still they were preeminently a social people, and the severity and isolation of their lot did not prevent the cultivation of a warm and cordial neighborly intercourse. There were frequent log-rollings, raisings and huskings to draw the men and boys together and give them an opportunity to hear the news of the neighborhood and exchange opinions upon the questions of the day. It was the custom of the women to take a wheel and a quantity of wool or flax and go to a neighbor's house, even though it were two or three miles away, to spend the afternoon in work and talk. "Spend the afternoon and take tea" is the way this kind of a visit, the only one possible to them, would have been described a century later. Its possibilities as a means of promoting true neighborly friend-



ship make us regret that it has passed. The diversions of the young people were apple and husking bees and evening parties. Dancing was the chief amusement, and the dances, before hotels and town halls were built, were always in the kitchens of the houses, because they were the only rooms big enough. The hours were "short and early;" they were usually from six or seven o'clock in the evening, to eleven. Card-playing was frowned upon, and when indulged in it was always with a measure of secrecy by the youth who were bold enough to disregard the prejudices of the sober-minded church members.

Every house had its gun, and hunting was an amusement of both men and boys at all seasons of the year. The woods were full of game. Another favorite recreation at all week-day gatherings was *Parker's History* pitching quoits. Boxing matches, foot of Londonderry. races and other athletic exercises were also favorite pastimes. "At all public gatherings," says Mr. Parker, "a ring would be formed and the combatants, in presence of the crowd and even of their own fathers and brothers, would encounter each other at short range or even at arm's length, giving and receiving blows until face, limbs and bodies bore the marks of almost savage brutality." The wrestling match at public meetings long survived, and the writer well remembers the interest it



excited as late as 1855, when the ring was still formed and the champions contended for mastery on the ground in front of the old Town Hall on Concord Street. Their out-of-door sports were characteristic, but they softened as education and refinement increased.

There is no indication that William Smith ever owned any land in Lunenburg, but it was there that he accumulated the little capital with which he purchased land and established a home in Peterborough. Of one incident in his life in Lunenburg there is authentic record. It is doubtful if there was any regularly organized militia in Massachusetts before 1750, although fear of Indians, especially in the frontier settlements, was never ceasing. If an alarm occurred, a military company was hurriedly formed for defence, and when immediate danger was over it was disbanded, to be re-formed upon the next occasion. William Smith served in two such companies in 1748. The first company was organized for a scout against the Indians, in what direction is not Mass. Archives. known. It was sent out by Major Edward Hartwell of Lunenburg, by order of Colonel Samuel Willard, and was commanded by Lieutenant Abel Pratt. William Smith enlisted as private in this company April 17, 1748, and served until April 24th, just one week, receiving ten shillings for his services. His name also appears on the rolls of



Captain Edward Hartwell's company, and also as a Mass. Archives. private. The records give the date of his enlistment as April 15, 1748, and show that he continued in service until October 16th, just six months, and that he was paid £13. 4s. 3d.; but they do not show of what nature the service performed by this company was, nor where it went. The amount of pay makes it evident that the men were entirely withdrawn from private life and spent their time in camp. In an affidavit attached to the roll there is a statement that some of the men whose names appear upon it sent substitutes and did not perform duty in their own persons, and William Smith may have been one of these. This would explain how it happens that his name appears on the rolls of both companies for a few days at the same time.

He was known in Peterborough as "Lieutenant" and "Captain" William Smith. Neither the archives of Massachusetts nor New Hampshire contain any record that he ever attained either rank, and if he did it was after he left Lunenburg. It is possible, however, that at some time between 1750 and 1760 he may have had command of a company raised in the manner we have described for defence against a threatened Indian raid, and that no record of it was ever made. It will be remembered that in the summer of 1755 the report was spread abroad that the





Indians had fallen upon the settlement of Keene, and that Captain Thomas Morison immediately set out with his company and marched to their relief, twenty miles through the woods on a hot summer's day, only to find the men of the Keene settlement peaceably mowing their grass, in no apprehension of the proximity of Indians. Yet the archives of New Hampshire contain no mention of such a company or such a service. It was no doubt in command of some local company that William Smith gained the military title by which he was generally known.

He passed the winter following his discharge in Lunenburg. A project for a fourth attempt to make a settlement in Peterborough was on foot, and his brother-in-law, Captain Thomas Morison, was the leader in it. The undertaking had its attractions for William Smith, a young man with no family, some capital and much energy and ambition. He had come to the parting of the ways, and he decided to join in it.



## CHAPTER IV.

### WILLIAM SMITH—HIS SOCIAL AND BUSINESS LIFE.

Smith's History of Peterborough. PETERBOROUGH was first surveyed for the Proprietors in 1738, by Joseph Wilder. The surveyor carved out four five hundred acre farms from what was then supposed to be the most desirable land in the town, one each for Jeremiah Gridley, John Hill, John Fowle and Peter Prescott. The other lots laid out in this survey were divided into plats of about fifty acres each, one for the settler and the adjoining one for the proprietor, which he was to convey to the settler when the latter had complied with certain conditions, thus making the settler's lot consist of one hundred acres. The parcels so platted were grouped around the five hundred acre farms and along the street road, which as first established was laid out from New Ipswich to the meeting-house near the center of the town. The following is the vote of the Proprietors at a meeting held in Boston, December 4, 1737, laying out the road:



Proprietors'  
Records.

"Voted the former committee (John Hill, Jeremiah Gridley, John Fowle, Jr., Jonathan Prescott and John <sup>Peter</sup> Prescott), be and hereby are empowered to agree with some suitable person to cut and clear a good way or road from New Ipswich to the Meeting House in said township as soon as may be." How soon this was done is not known. The remainder of the township was left unsurveyed.

Morison's Cen-  
tennial Address.

An attempt was made to settle the town the following year, but the men were frightened away by the Indians. It was repeated in 1742, and again in 1743 and 1744, with like results. It is not known that any of the pioneers were killed or injured, or their property destroyed, by the savages. In 1744, Indians did steal the provisions of Captain Thomas Morison from his camp on the east side of the river near the South Factory. But they frequently annoyed the settlers, and the last of September or the first of October, 1750, they broke open a house while the occupants were absent and carried away many things. The war between France and England broke out in 1744, and the Indians of Canada and along the borders, for reasons not necessary to state here, took up the cause of France. The resolution of the men who came in 1744, to postpone further operations until it should have ended, was a wise one. Peterborough did not then mark the extreme northerly or westerly limit



of the English settlements. Families had already established themselves at Charlestown, Hinsdale, Swanzey, Keene and Pennacook (Concord), and had made some progress in clearing land and building houses. In 1747, all these towns were  
Belknap's History of N. H. raided by the savages, dwellings burned, some of the inhabitants killed and many carried captives to Canada. It is probable that had there been a settlement in Peterborough that year it would have shared the same fate.

The war came to an end in 1748, and the attention of the men who had made beginnings in Peterborough between 1739 and 1744, was again turned to the enterprise. Captain Thomas Morison, the leader of it, was well fitted to head such an undertaking. He was then thirty-nine years of age, in the prime of life, and was a man of great energy and resolution,  
Morison's Genealogy of the Morison Family. and of undaunted courage. In 1743, he sold his farm in Londonderry and removed to Lunenburg, but so far as the records show, did not purchase any real estate there. He and his companions left Lunenburg in the spring of 1749 and went to Peterborough by way of Townsend, New Ipswich, and thence over the street road, probably then cleared, to the places selected by them for their new abode. He located on the lot where he had made a beginning five years before, on the east side of the river near the South Factory, built his log





house, and the following year, 1750, moved thither his wife and children and settled down to the serious work of clearing his land and bringing it under cultivation.

The migration to the town in 1749 was, so far as existing records show, entirely from Lunenburg. The Scotch-Irish immigrants to Lunenburg and Londonderry had extensively intermarried and were well known to each other. When a foothold had been obtained in the new town by the men from Lunenburg, the men of Londonderry joined in the enterprise, and after 1750 many of them went there. There is no doubt that among those who accompanied Captain Morrison in 1749, were William Smith and his brother John. William was then twenty-six years of age, John thirty-four, and both, like all the immigrants from Great Britain in that day and in this, were ambitious to become landed proprietors. John was certainly in Peterborough the following year, for he with five others signed a petition to the Lieutenant-Governor and Council and House of Representatives of Massachusetts Bay for assistance in building a fort for the protection of the settlers. This petition is as follows:



Mass. Archives. *To his honor Spencer Phips, Esquire, Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, The Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Council and Hon<sup>ble</sup> House of Representatives of said Province in General Court assembled at Boston Sept. 26th, 1750.*

The Petition of the Subscribers, Proprietors and Inhabitants of a Township called Petterboro': for themselves and the other Proprietors and Inhabitants of said Township:

Most humbly shew

That the said Township lyes exposed to the Indians it being a Frontier Town and but about six miles north from the line parting this Government and that of New Hampshire. And several Indians have appeared in said Township and last Sabbath day some of them broke open a house there and none of the family being at home, rifled the same and carried away many things. And the Inhabitants are put in great fear and Terror of their lives by the Indians; so that they must be obliged to leave the town which is now very considerably settled unless they can have some relief from the Great Goodness of your honours:

And as for as much as the said Township is so situated, that if the Inhabitants should leave it Townsend, Hollis, Lunenburg, Leominster, Lancaster, would be exposed to the cruelty of the Indians, and would become an easy prey to them. But if your Pet<sup>rs</sup> can be protected by your Honours and have a number of men sent to their assistance and a few block houses or a Fort built for them they make no doubt with the blessing of God they shall be able to defend the said Township and to keep the Indians from making any attempt on the Towns aforementioned which are all surrounded by said Peterborough.

Your Pet<sup>rs</sup> therefore most humbly pray your Honours would be pleased to take their distressed



circumstances into consideration and allow them liberty, at the charge of this Government, to build Block Houses or a Fort and supply them with fifteen or twenty men for such a length of time as your Honours shall think proper, that so they may defend the said Township against the Indians and by that means serve the Province by securing the other towns afore-said from falling into the Indians' hands, or that Your Honours would grant them such other relief as in your great wisdom shall seem meet and as in duty bound will ever pray &c

THOMAS MORISON

JOHN HILL

JOHN WHITE

JAMES GORDON

ALEX ROBBE

WILLIAM SCOTT

JAMES MITCHELL

THOMAS VENDER

JOHN SMITH

WILLIAM ROBBE

Boston, October 4th, 1750.

This petition was laid before the Lieutenant-Governor and Council, October 4, 1750, and on the original in the Archives at Boston are the following endorsements: "Oct. 6th. Read and sent down." "Oct. 9th. Ordered to lie on the table." The Journal of the House does not show that it was ever acted upon, or that the prayer of the petitioners was granted. The fort was built on Ritchie Hill, by whom is not known, most probably by the settlers, and it is doubtful if it was ever garrisoned. It is an interesting document in several ways. It shows that the town was already called Peterborough, and is the earliest known mention of the fact. It is strikingly suggestive of the fear of the Indians in which the settlers then lived. Lastly, it is conclusive





TS LTH. BOSTON.

STAKE &  
PILE OF  
STONES

H 63 SHAW WASHEURN	F 73 WYMAN	F 128 GREEN 37 1/2
H 62 SHAW	H 72 ASH SHAW	G 100 CUDWORTH G 99.
F 61 RICHARDSON	H 71 SHAW B. MITCHEL	F 101 MASON H 20
F 60 S. MOORE	G 70 S. MOORE	F 102 MASON H 19
G 59 JOHN MOORE	G 69	G 103 MASON F 18
		G 104 MASON

STAKE & STONE.

THE LOTS NO 128  
129 TO 134 INCLUSIVE  
MARKED MASON  
ARE SET OFF TO  
MASON PROP.  
CONFORMABLE TO  
THEIR GRANT THE  
22 DAY MAY, 1765





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# LAND MAP OF PETERBOROUGH

REPRODUCED BY S. MORISON FROM MAP IN THE  
HANDWRITING OF  
HON. JEREMIAH SMITH L.L.D.  
TRANSCRIBED IN 1787.



MAP SHOWS CITY BOUNDARY

NORTH LINE, RUNNING EAST, 6 MILES.

WEST LINE, RUNNING NORTH, 6 MILES.

EAST LINE, RUNNING SOUTH, 6 MILES.

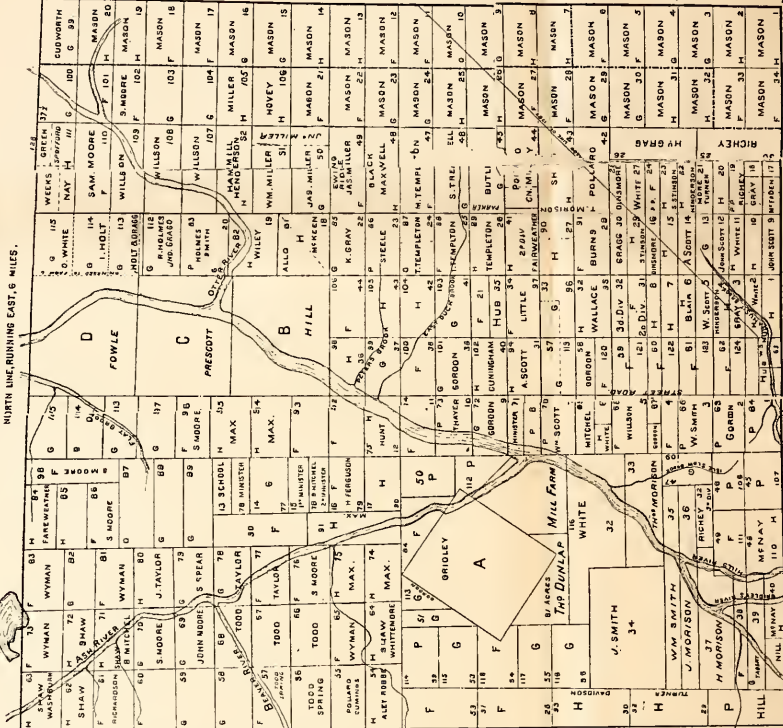
SOUTH LINE, RUNNING WEST, 6 MILES, AS BY ROADS.

THIS MAP WAS  
DRAWN BY  
JEREMIAH SMITH  
IN 1787  
AND WAS  
TRANSCRIBED  
IN 1787  
BY  
S. MORISON

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BY  
S. MORISON

MAP BY S. MORISON





evidence that John Smith and the others signing the petition were in Peterborough in 1750. It was without doubt drawn up and signed in Peterborough, for all the signatures are the personal autographs of the men whose names are attached to it.

There is evidence which fixes the arrival of William Smith in Peterborough in 1749 beyond a doubt. The Elm Hill lot was one of those laid out in 1738, in the first survey by Joseph Wilder, and had all the peculiarities and conditions attached to it which pertained to the lots carved out in that survey. In the plan of the town given in Dr. Smith's History of Peterborough (p. 357), lots 32-37 in the southwest part of the town are without those conditions. The second survey was ordered October 16, 1749, and was probably made very soon after that date. "These lots," says Dr. N. H. Morison, whose historical accuracy none will question, "were settled before the second survey began. Their bounds were probably arranged to suit the settlers actually in possession of them, which accounts for their great size and irregularity. They were never divided among the proprietors, and no mention of them whatever appears in their records."

This is conclusive evidence that William Smith was there and had made a beginning on lot 35 before the winter of 1749-50, when the second survey was made. Lot 35 joins the lot of his brother John and



also that of his brother-in-law, Captain Morison. Coming together and closely related, they selected adjoining lots as was natural. Probably they knew of the survey of 1738 and the conditions attached to lots laid out by it, and this may have been one reason for their choosing land elsewhere.

On this lot, No. 35, William Smith began his life in Peterborough. During the summer of 1749 and the winter following he worked at clearing it. He first cut a strip twenty feet wide around the borders to mark the bounds of what he wished to purchase, as did many of the other settlers. Whether he built any house upon it we do not know. Sometime in 1750 or 1751 he appears to have changed his mind and decided to locate upon lots 3 and 66 on the street road—the Elm Hill lots. His reasons for this removal can only be surmised: The shape of lot 35 was inconvenient; it was 52 by 521 rods; it lay on both sides of the river, which at that time could only be crossed by boats, or in very dry weather, on the rocks, and some of the land was low and swampy. On the other hand, lots 3 and 66 were on high ground and had been cleared; the site commanded a wide view of the surrounding country as did the site of his father's house in Lunenburg. Also, the influx of settlers may have rendered the lots more desirable than at the time of his first arrival. New comers were occupying the lots on the street road, while in



1749 they seemed to prefer the southwest parts of the town.

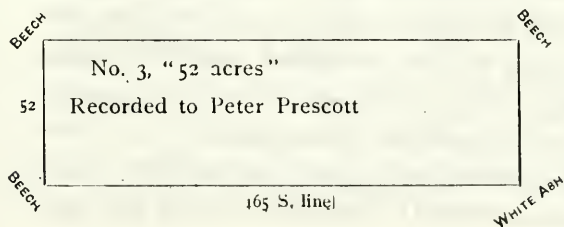
Proprietors' December 18, 1738, the Proprietors held  
Records. a meeting in Boston and divided among themselves the lots which had been surveyed. Nos. 3 and 66 were drawn by Peter Prescott and assigned to him the same day. The following are the plans and descriptions of the lots as recorded in the Proprietors' records, page 14:

Proprietors' The following lots were drawn by Peter  
Records. Prescott. The lot no. 3 contains 52 acres and lies in the south part of the town in the range of lots as they go into town and is bounded S. on the lot no. 65 and N. on the lot 66. It begins at a white ash at the south east corner and from thence it runs west 165 rods to a beech the S.W. corner and from thence it runs N. 52 rods to a beech the N.W. corner and from thence it runs E. 165 rods to a beech the N. E. corner and from thence it runs S. straight to where it began, 52 rods. This lot butts E. upon the lot no. 123.

JOSEPH WILDER, JUN., *Surveyor*.

Dec. 18th, 1738. Entered and recorded. Recorded to Peter Prescott.

Att. PETER PRESCOTT, *P. C.*







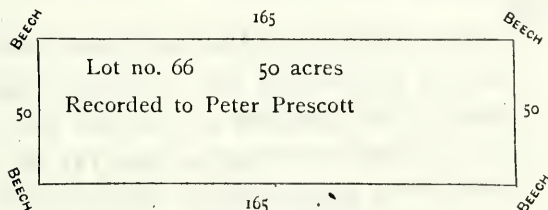
Proprietors'  
Records.

THE lot no. 66 contains 50 acres besides the highway 6 rods across it and lies in the S. part of the town and bounds on the lot no. 3 S. and N. on the lot no 4. It butts E. on the lot no 60 and W. on to lot no. 109. It begins at a beech the S. E. corner and from thence it runs W. 165 rods to a beech the S.W. corner and from thence it runs N. 50 rods to a beech the N.W. corner and from thence it runs east 165 rods to a beech the N. E. corner and from thence it runs south straight to where it began.

JOSEPH WILDER, JUN., *Surveyor*.

Dec. 18th, 1738, entered and recorded.

att. PETER PRESCOTT, *P. C.*



Peter Prescott was therefore the first owner of lots 3 and 66. When and to whom he parted with his title we do not know, but it was probably about 1748 or 1750. They came subsequently to the ownership of John Hill. The Proprietors' records contain no mention of their transfer by the original owner. William Smith was not the original occupant of the lots. A Mr. Bridge had already made a beginning there and cut trees. Who he was, whence he came and whither he went are utterly unknown. There is no doubt that

Samuel Smith's  
Notes.



William Smith was the first permanent settler upon them. Here, in the summer or fall of 1751, he built his log house and shingled it with bark, cleared some of the land and made ready for the coming of his prospective wife, Elizabeth Morison of Londonderry, sister of Captain Morison, who, it will be remembered, had married his sister Mary some years before. The marriage took place in Londonderry Genealogy of the evening of December 31, 1751. William Smith. The day was "the coldest he ever knew."

Mr. Parker has given a detailed description of the marriage customs of the Scotch-Irish of Londonderry taken from an eye witness whose memory went back to 1750, and in it we have probably a substantially exact account of the wedding of Elizabeth Morison and William Smith. He says:

These occasions were celebrated with the strongest demonstrations of joy. When two persons were about to be married it was customary for the gentleman, in company with the father of the lady or some one of her nearest connections, to go to the minister of the town and request publishment; this the minister usually employed the Clerk of the Parish to perform, but sometimes did it himself. Meantime preparations were made for a sumptuous entertainment. The guests were all invited at least three days before the wedding, it being considered an unpardonable affront to receive an invitation only the day previous. The bridegroom selected one of his intimate friends for the "best man," who was to officiate

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as master of the ceremony, and the bride likewise one of her companions as "best maid." The morning of the marriage day was ushered in with the discharge of musketry in the respective neighborhoods of the persons who were to be united. This practice, it seems, originated in Ireland in consequence of the Catholics having been after the Revolution deprived of the use of firearms. The Protestants, proud of the superior privilege which they enjoyed, made a display of their warlike instruments on all public occasions. Seldom was a respectable man married without a sword by his side. At the appointed hour the groom proceeded from his dwelling with his select friends, male and female; about half way on their progress to the house of the bride they were met by her select male friends; and on meeting, each company made choice of one of their number "to run for the bottle" to the bride's house. The champion of the race who returned first with the bottle gave a toast, drank to the bridegroom's health, and having passed round the bottle, the whole party proceeded, saluted by the firing of muskets and answering these salutes with pistols. When they arrived at the bride's residence the bridegroom's company were placed in an apartment by themselves, and it was considered an act of impoliteness for any one of the bride's company to intrude. When the ceremony was to commence the best man first introduced the bridegroom; then entering the bride's apartments, led her into the room, and placing her at the right hand of her intended, took his station directly behind them, as did the best maid. The minister commenced the marriage service with a prayer; on requesting the parties to join hands, each put the right hand behind, when the glove was drawn off by the best man and maid. Their hands being joined, the marriage covenant was addressed to them with appropriate remarks on the nature and responsibilities of the connection thus formed. Having con-



cluded with another prayer, he requested the groom to salute the bride, which being done the minister performed the same ceremony, and was immediately followed by the male part of the company; the females in like manner saluted the bridegroom.

The ceremony being concluded, the whole company sat down to an entertainment at which the best man and maid presided. Soon after the entertainment the room was cleared for the dance and other amusements. "And the evening," remarks our aged informant, kindling at the recollection of bygone scenes, "was spent with a degree of pleasure of which our modern fashionables are perfectly ignorant."

Probably also this is a correct description of the weddings of Thomas Morison and Mary Smith, and John Smith and Mary Harkness, both of which took place in Lunenburg. The Rev. William Davidson was the officiating clergyman at the wedding of William Smith and Elizabeth Morison. The "best man" was William Smith's intimate friend, Samuel Moore, and the "best maid" was Margaret, called "Peggy," Morison, sister of the bride. No doubt these two persons had already become attached to each other. But

" Every wedding, says the proverb,  
Makes another, soon or late."

This wedding made another speedily. The festivities inspired Samuel Moore and Margaret Morison to imitate the example of the bride and groom without more formality. So at the close of the entertainment they left the house, and taking their horses





rode over to Chester, where they were married by the Rev. Ebenezer Flagg that same night. This was one of the so-called "Flagg marriages," and a word of explanation is necessary.

Parker's History Not all the marriages among the Scotch of Londonderry. Irish of Londonderry were celebrated with the formalities above described. For some years previous to the Revolution the colonial governor of New Hampshire had been authorized to grant licenses as a means of increasing his salary. He was allowed two crowns for each license he signed, and as facilities were thus afforded for clandestine marriages, he obtained in this way a considerable revenue. The ministers of Londonderry opposed the practice, which often led to serious evils, and it was regarded as a subject for discipline, as the church records show. But there were ministers who approved of it, and furnished themselves with governor's licenses in blank. Rev. Ebenezer Flagg of Chester was one of these, and to him those who wished to marry without publishment would resort from the surrounding towns.

After the wedding, William Smith took his wife to Peterborough, established himself and her in their new home, and settled down to the serious work of subduing that part of the wilderness which he could now call his own. His land was heavily wooded with elm, rock and white maple, beech, birch, black



ash and other deciduous trees, mixed with hemlock, spruce and pine. The soil was underlaid with a strata of hard blue clay. The ground was wet, full of springs and very rocky, as the stone walls around the fields bear evidence to this day. How great an undertaking it was to clear it and bring it into proper condition for cultivation none can better appreciate than those who followed the plow over its rocky acres in after days, picked the stones on its thickly strewn fields, and wrested by hard labor a living from the soil.

Doctor Morison, in his life of her son, Judge Smith, has given a very interesting sketch of Elizabeth Morison. Her mother was Margaret Wallace (supposed to be of the race of Sir William Wallace, although Leonard ~~W~~<sup>A</sup> Morison in his history of the Morison family makes no mention of the tradition). She was a native of Ireland and had married John Morison before they came to America in 1719. She was a woman of great energy and force of character, which her daughter inherited in abundant measure. Elizabeth Smith had all the characteristics of the Puritans and her own race combined—their rigid integrity, their absolute truthfulness, their uncompromising candor, their hatred of shams, their daring courage, their horror of idleness and their supremely democratic spirit. She had that distrust of the feelings which repressed all outward demonstrations of



affection, so that only her closest friends realized her real warmth and tenderness of heart. This was a marked trait of many of her descendants and often caused them to be misjudged and misunderstood.

In her humble home in the wilderness she did her full share toward the support of the family, "and like many such," says Doctor Morison, "kept the scold a-going." "Johnny," asked Mr. Miller, the nearest neighbor, of one of her children, "does your mother ever scold?" "Yes," said Johnny, discreetly, "sometimes." "That's not always," rejoined the neighbor; "my wife scolds eternally." "She had ten children in twelve years," continues Doctor Morison, "but found time to engage in out-door work. She assisted in harvesting the corn, and was known to dig sixteen bushels of potatoes in a day." She

Life of Judge Smith. was an excellent manager of her household affairs. . The question of what they were to eat was never allowed to be asked by her children, and they went through life with great indifference to such things. One of the sons, however, was once heard to wish that he were a king, for then he could have all the barley broth he wanted. This son was afterward a member of Congress. A daughter once came home crying, and told her mother that the little girls she had been visiting had laughed at her because she had no jerkin. "Never mind," said her mother, "ye'll hae jerkins when they



hae nane." Before her marriage she had two silk gowns, the only ones she ever owned, and she so carefully preserved them that they were handed down to her children and grandchildren. She never wore them even to meeting, except on sacrament days or when her children were to be baptized. Her linen aprons, the only article of finery even worn by herself or her daughters, were washed and plaited once a year. They were carried to meeting in the hand, put on as they entered the meeting-house and folded up "in the last singing." There was one handsome baby's dress which went down successively to all her eleven children.

An incident happening about 1762 or 1763 shows her great personal courage. There was a well near the road and close by the house. It was deep and the sides were walled up with rough stones. The boys liked to play around it. One day the four oldest were leaning over it and trying to see which could reach down the farthest. Jeremiah, the youngest, in his zeal to outdo the others, lost his balance and fell in. The others rushed to the house and roused their mother who was lying down, with the cry of, "Jerry's in the well! Jerry's in the well!" She hurried thither and looking down into it said, "He is not here," Jerry being under water. Without a moment's hesitation she climbed down to the water, placing her feet on the slippery stones and





supporting herself as best she could, and when the boy came up, caught and held him until the others brought Mr. Miller to her assistance, and mother and child were safely drawn up. She had her reward, for the son she saved at such risk of her own life became a member of Congress, Judge of the District Court of the United States, Governor of the State, and twice its Chief Justice. The writer gives this story as it was related to him by her granddaughter, Mrs. N. S. Foster. Doctor Morison, in his life of Judge Smith, gives a slightly different version, and says it was Mr. Miller who climbed down into the well.

She spoke broad Scotch, for which she never apologized nor felt ashamed. Her children did not like it, and sometimes tried to persuade her that she might talk like other people if she chose. "Granny," they would ask, "why don't you stop speaking Scotch and talk like the rest of us?" "I could na if I would, and indeed I'll na try," she always answered, sturdily. Her notions of family discipline were none of the mildest, although she had a kind heart and was much more lenient in practice than in theory. "I've been to Samooel Life of Judge Smith. Moore's," she once said to her husband upon returning from a visit to her brother-in-law, "and there's family government, so there is. If you were worth your ears you'd keep your boys at 'hame."



Her husband heard her through and then asked her if she remembered the calf they kept tied up in the barn so long. "Ay, ay." "And do you mind that when we let it out it ran till it broke its leg?" On the occasion of some unusual gathering at the house, Jeremiah, who was playing about the room, upset a shelf. In the confusion that ensued, his mother, attending to her maternal duties first, took the boy and gave him a smart whipping; on finding that her neighbor Miller's punch bowl had been broken, she concluded that the punishment had not been at all proportioned to the offence, and gave him another whipping. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" was the rule. Nevertheless, Jeremiah could remember but two or three whippings that had fallen to his share.\*

"Mrs. Smith was a good singer of Scotch songs," says Doctor Morison, "and her own children, as well as those of her neighbors, were always glad to leave their noisy sports and crowd around to hear her sing." It is greatly to be regretted that her songs have not come down to us with the tradition of her sweet voice. She must have sung of the battle of the Boyne; she may have sung also the Lament for Flodden, or old Scotch and Irish ballads now lost. The marked love of music shown by the Smiths as a family is probably an inheritance from her, although not all of them have been singers. William Smith



played the bass viol and John Smith the flute, as we have noted elsewhere; another John Smith, eldest son of "Squire John," led the choir and had family and local fame as a sweet singer.

She led as laborious a life as her husband. Besides her nine children there were for many years an aged parent, besides other relatives to make up the family, not to speak of hired men and women. Preparing the food for this large family was but a small part of her work. She spun and wove the flax and the wool out of which she made all of their clothing. The tradition is still preserved among her descendants that she spun and wove the linen that paid for the large eight-day clock, so long a conspicuous ornament of the house, which was passed down to son, grandson and great-grandson successively, and is now a treasured memorial of the old home. She carried it through the forest on horseback, so the story goes, from Fitchburg to Peterborough, guided on her way by a line of marked trees. It was considered a great acquisition, and one day when her boys opened the case to show it off to some of the neighbor's children, and she caught them at it, she gave each of her own children concerned a sound whipping. The money she added to the family income by spinning and weaving linen helped materially to send Jeremiah to college and Samuel to Exeter and Andover. After the former had acquired

Life of  
Judge Smith.



a little book knowledge he undertook upon one occasion to comment upon his mother's language as ungrammatical. "But who taught ye langage?" was the sharp retort. "It was my wheel; and when ye'll hae spun as many lang threads to teach me grammar as I hae to clothe ye, I'll talk better grammar."

We may well marvel at the physical constitution and we may well admire the industry and energy of the strong, courageous woman who stood at the head of this household for so many years. She was the disciplinarian of the family, and no doubt the gentle, easy-going disposition of her husband often tried her patience. He did not believe in governing too much, and acted upon the theory that many of the perplexities of life work themselves out harmlessly if let severely alone. Her decision of character was equal to her energy. She was a strict Presbyterian in her faith, and was a member of the church for many years. She was truly pious. Her piety was

Life of Judge Smith.      free from all cant, affectation and hypocrisy. A niece of hers, a young orphan girl, somewhat feeble in mind, who lived in her house, had been guilty of some great offence, and there was a gathering of the relatives to consider what should be done. A sister of Mrs. Smith's who was looked upon as one of the elect, proposed "to gar her into the barn to pray," as if the poor girl were





not fit to be prayed with except among the cattle. Mrs. Smith rejected the proposal in words and manner which made an impression upon the minds of her children as lasting as it was unfavorable to a proud and sanctimonious faith.

Beginning her married life in a log hut in an almost unbroken wilderness, she lived to see the forests cleared, the land fenced and brought under cultivation, and the log houses replaced by large and commodious farm buildings furnished with comforts and conveniences. For many years before her death her sons were filling important places in the church and in the town, leaders in the community and respected by all.

But in her old age her mind became enfeebled and she was subject to harmless delusions, one of which was that she was away from or had lost her home. When this idea took possession of her she would go to her son Jonathan and looking beseechingly in his face, beg him to take her back to it. "Come, mother, we will go," he would answer; and, taking her by the hand, he would lead her from room to room through the house, talking the while of old times and old neighbors, and who lived in this house and who in that, until they came back to her own room again, when he would say, "Now, mother, we are there; you are at home again;" and she would sit down contentedly in her chair. She survived her



husband some months. September 15, 1808, she found a better home than the one she thought she had lost.

Genealogy of      The children of William and Elizabeth  
William Smith.      Smith were as follows:

Robert,	born	Feby 15th, 1753	died	December 31st, 1795.
John	"	Apr. 10th, 1754	"	August 7th, 1821.
James	"	Jan. 29th 1756	"	" 11th, 1842.
William	"	March 14th, 1757	"	January 31st, 1776.
Elizabeth	"	July 28th 1758	"	May 21st, 1833.
Jeremiah	"	Nov. 29th, 1759	"	Sept. 21st, 1842.
Hannah	"	May 18th, 1761	"	August 28th, 1813.
Jonathan	"	Apr. 11th 1763	"	" 29th, 1842.
Samuel	"	Nov. 11th, 1765	"	Apr. 25th, 1842.
A child	"		"	in infancy.

We have many glimpses of life within that house aside from those given by Doctor Morison in his life Samuel Smith's of Judge Smith. At the birth of her Notes. oldest son Elizabeth Smith was nursed through her illness by her sister, Hannah Morison, who came from Londonderry for that purpose. There was no physician in the town until 1763, and in 1753 there was none nearer than Lunenburg or Londonderry. Hannah Morison fell ill soon after, and was an invalid for the rest of her life. She married Samuel Todd about 1753 and lived with her sister in Peterborough for a year after her marriage, when she returned to Londonderry for medical treatment, but she afterwards came back to Peterborough and died there in 1760, at the age of thirty.



It was a year and a half later, that is, in the autumn of 1754, that the episode of the Indian alarm occurred at Elm Hill Farm. There were then two children in the family, one a year and a half old, the other an infant of six months, both boys. Whether the first barn was building or had been already built we do not know, but in all probability the parents were still living in their log cabin, and they were alone. Their nearest neighbor was one Henderson, who lived, tradition says, "in the house opposite;" whether that means on the opposite side of the street road or on the site of the house where Moses Gowing lived long afterward, it is now impossible to say. In the former case all traces of the habitation have long since disappeared. It must be remembered that the French and Indian War had actually begun and that fear of Indian attacks had greatly increased in the settlement in consequence, as the petition to

Centennial  
Address,

Governor Wentworth, given on a later page, shows. William and Elizabeth Smith were awakened one night about midnight by horrid shrieks and screams which seemed to come from the nearest house. Believing the Indians to be upon them, they snatched each a child and fled into the woods without stopping to dress. They made their way through the woods and across a stream, no one could ever tell how, to the house of Captain Morison, two miles distant. Captain Morison furnished



them with clothes, led them and his own family into the woods south of his house and concealed them, and then started for the fort on Ritchie Hill, a mile further south, declaring that if he should meet the Indians they would know it for he should certainly have time to fire and kill one of them before being killed or captured himself. Meanwhile the Swan family had taken the alarm and fled to the fort, and one of the sons, returning very late from a visit to his sweetheart, and finding his father's clothes and boots by his bedside and the house empty and deserted, supposed they had been carried off by the Indians, and spread the alarm still further; so that it was not until the next morning that the truth was known. Some young men at the Henderson house had made the shrieks and outcries for the purpose of frightening their neighbors, the Smiths. This dread of savages did not pass away until after the close of the war. It was a heavy weight upon the growth and prosperity of the settlement, and after it was removed the population increased more rapidly.

The log cabin was scantily furnished, and what furniture it had, was rude and simple. The table and eating utensils were of wood, and probably of domestic manufacture. The spoons were made of laurel wood, whence the name "spoon wood" or "spoon hunt" by which the people of that and





the succeeding generations called the shrub known to us as mountain laurel. We do not know at what date crockery and steel knives and forks came into use. Probably as mechanics settled in town the wooden utensils were gradually replaced by metal; and crockery and pewter dishes could be bought at the store which was opened about 1770. The food consisted of corn, barley and rye bread, beans and potatoes; pork was a stand-by, and fish and game were abundant; after the introduction of cattle the latter gave way in part to fresh and salt beef. Sugar and molasses, tea and coffee, could not have found their way on the table before the opening of the store. But for the first twenty years the bill of fare was very limited and the supply not always abundant. It was a saying of William, youngest son of the John who was the elder brother of William Smith, that "through his long life he had never seen the bottom of his pork barrel." But this was not always the case with the generation preceding him, to whom the question of daily bread was sometimes a very serious one; the wish of the boy who was afterwards a member of Congress arose from sheer hunger.

Nor do we know in what year the log cabin was replaced by the one-story frame dwelling, a part of which now forms the ell at Elm Hill farm-house. Tradition says the first frame houses were small and





LOOKING EAST FROM THE HOUSE.

THE PACK MONADNOCK.



poorly built, and there is at least one well authenticated story which confirms tradition. A party of friends had assembled at Samuel Judge Smith. Moore's, and while William Smith was saying grace at the dinner-table, the floor suddenly gave way and the whole party, dinner and all, found themselves in the cellar.

The children were set to work almost as soon as they could walk, a family custom which was faithfully handed down from father to son as long as William Smith's descendants owned Elm Hill. William Smith's mildness of temper and disposition did not prevent his being as fiercely industrious as his wife. "Lawful soul," he would say in his old age to any one whom he found by any chance idle, "Lawful soul, do do something." During the first twenty-five or thirty years books seldom found their way into the house to enliven the long winter evenings, and when they did they had to be read by firelight, for it was many years before there were candles. Doctor Morison describes Jeremiah Smith stretched out before the kitchen fire reading a borrowed book by the light of the blazing pine knots. The kitchens were large and frequently extended the whole length of the house; and it was the living room of the family. The front rooms, when there were any, were sacred to weddings, funerals, church meetings and the visits of the minister.



William and Elizabeth Smith were Presbyterians until late in life and faithfully observed all the ordinances of the church. Grace was said at their table at every meal. The rules of the church were very strict in regard to daily family prayer and daily reading of the Bible, and neglect on the part of the church members to observe them was the subject of prompt investigation and rebuke by the minister. When any case of omission came to his knowledge he went immediately to the offender's house, and though it were late at night compelled him to rise from his bed, read a chapter in the Bible and offer prayer. Whether there were many cases of delinquency or not we do not know. We are inclined to think there were few, for we do know that life in the wilderness brought to the devout church member's mind a very realizing sense of his dependence on an overruling Power, which he could not but acknowledge with humility and reverent gratitude. The scene sketched for us in the Cotter's Saturday Night was daily witnessed in William Smith's humble home:

The cheerful supper done, wi' serious face,  
They round the ingle, form a circle wide;  
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;  
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,  
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;  
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
He wales a portion with judicious care;  
And "Let us worship God," he says, with solemn air.





Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,  
 The saint, the father, and the husband prays;  
 Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"  
 That thus they all shall meet in future days;  
 There ever bask in uncreated rays,  
 No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,  
 Together hymning their Creator's praise,  
 In such society, yet still more dear;  
 While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

In the earlier years of the town, church services were often omitted in the winter season on account of the difficulties of travel. Only the most inclement weather, however, kept the church members at home. The children were required to go regularly as soon as they were old enough to walk. Peterborough had been settled more than twenty years before horses were introduced or any one was seen going to church on horseback; before that, every one went on foot. There were two long services, with a noon intermission. "The preaching of that period," says Doctor Morison in his centennial address, "was usually without notes, the sermons very ordinary, very long, and made up very much of repetitions, especially of a continued play upon the words of the text." The men spent the intermission under the trees, discussing the sermon or the news of the day. The women gathered in groups in and about the house and talked over the affairs of the church and of their several neighborhoods. They were thinkers as well as talkers, and aside from re-



ligious duty the opportunities for an interchange of opinions were too infrequent to suffer the Sunday gatherings to be neglected. At the close of the afternoon service they went home to spend the rest of the day in study of the Bible and catechism. Sunday was kept from Saturday night at dark to Sunday night at the same hour. During the week there was usually a meeting of the church members at the house of some one of them, at which the minister was always present as teacher and leader. These meetings were primarily for examination and instruction in the Bible and catechism, but all questions of church discipline were there debated and settled.

The minister's visit was an event in the family and all the best things of the house were set out for him. The people of that day were no total abstiners, and he took the rum that was offered him "for his stomach's sake" with as little compunction as his most bibulous parishioner. Neither spiritual leader nor follower saw the least harm in it. A supply was constantly on hand, for it was the chosen emblem of hospitality and good fellowship. It was set before the minister, the visitor, the transient guest and the neighbors alike, and it was liberally supplied at all social gatherings. The town was unfortunate in its first two settled ministers, both of whom had uncontrollable appetites for "the cup." At a meeting of the Londonderry Presbytery, held August 30, 1788,



Dr. Smith's History of Peterborough. Deacon Samuel Moore preferred charges against Mr. Annan, among other things for his gross intemperance. One of the specifications was his drunkenness and unseemly behavior at the house of William Smith on some social occasion, of which the particulars are not mentioned. Mr. Moore, it will be remembered, was the brother-in-law of William Smith, and was probably present, so that he could speak from personal knowledge. Stray references to the affair also show that the charge was undoubtedly true. The outcome of the trial is not recorded; nevertheless Mr. Annan continued to preach in the church until 1792, when he withdrew voluntarily. Such charges would now drive any minister from the pulpit and the person who supplied him with the weapon of sin from office and membership in the church as well. While the unfortunate affair added to the unpopularity of Mr. Annan, it does not seem to have impaired the church standing of William Smith nor to have cooled the cordial relations between him and his brother-in-law.

Elizabeth Smith's mother, Margaret (Wallace) Morison, spent her last years at the house of William Smith, and died there April 18, 1769. Life of Judge Smith. A wake was held the night before her burial. This custom, Irish and not Scotch, had been adopted by the Scotch-Irish during their residence in Ireland. It may have prevailed in the town at



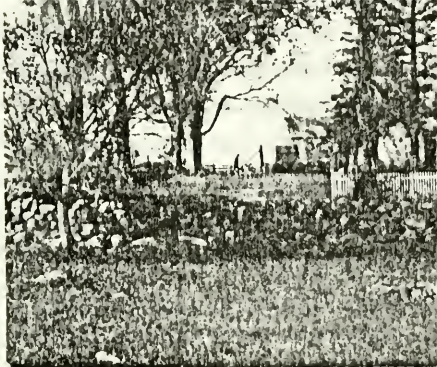
this period, but this is the only recorded instance of its occurrence among the early settlers of Peterborough. Certainly it had no strong hold upon them, and it died out with the generation of William Smith. On this occasion it was held with the usual ceremonies. The near relatives and neighbors assembled in the evening to watch through the night with the body in the dimly lighted room. The exercises began with the reading of the Bible, followed by prayer; then words of consolation and comfort were spoken to the mourners, and the virtues and character of the deceased were passed in review; soon stories of ghosts, witches and demons were exchanged, tales of death warnings to the deceased and to her friends. Later, stimulants were freely circulated, and before morning there was eating as well as drinking. Mr. Parker, in speaking of the custom, says, "The affair often ended by shouts of laughter and revelry breaking up the company."

We cannot think this was the case in the present instance. All the children of William and Elizabeth Smith who were old enough were present, and one of them at least, who was then ten years old, received an impression that remained with him through life.

Many funerals took place at the house, for death was no infrequent visitor to the family circle. Such events always drew a large company, and the observances were well defined and strictly followed. All







THE LANE.  
SOUTH SIDE OF HOUSE



Parker's History of Londonderry. the relatives were invited, and to omit any one, however distantly connected, was a serious breach of propriety. The neighbors were present, and the assembly was often quite as numerous as the congregations at church on Sunday. The minister opened the exercises with prayer; liquors were then served; an address followed, then liquors were again passed around. After the friends had taken leave of the remains the whole company, mostly on foot, followed the body to the grave. On the return of the friends and relatives to the house a sumptuous repast was served, of which all partook. The coffin was borne by four strong young men. It was a burdensome duty when the houses were so far from the burial ground, but it was not until 1802 that there was any hearse. The town after many attempts purchased one that year.

The family knew sickness also, and the doctor was an occasional visitor. In one of Doctor Young's books is found the following account:

LIEUT. WILLIAM SMITH.

1766.	To two visits	2s.
1767	Gum Galba ½ oz.	6d.
"	Aug. 8 Extract D	6d.
1768.	Apr. 26 Invisere	1s.
"	July 25 " et consilium	1s. 6d.
"	July 27 "	1s.
"	" " Phlebotomy (bleeding)	6d.
"	" " (1) Emplast Epispast 1 ½ oz.	1s. 6d.
"	" " Gum Myrrh 1do.	1s.
"	" " Pulv. Jalap 1 pt. (calomel)	1s. 6d.
"	" " Elixir Cough 1pt.	3d.



From the charges of July 27th it would seem that the disease was pneumonia or something similar. The treatment was certainly heroic. But all the children except two lived and reached a good old age; one died in infancy, and another, a son named William, at the age of nineteen years; considering the hygienic and economic conditions of the time, this is an exceptional record of health and good fortune.

There were no cattle in town before 1754. "For a long time," says Doctor Morison, "there were no oxen, and for a still longer time no horses." When William Smith built his first frame barn in 1754, he must have had some live stock to put into it, but of what it consisted we do not know. In the absence of beasts of burden the work of clearing the land progressed but slowly. Had it not been for the spirit of mutual helpfulness among the settlers it could scarcely have progressed at all. The principle of coöperation among them was as active as it is now, and it was put into application in a way that made it very real. They did not give it that name, nor indeed any name; but the thing itself was there; and there was vastly more of the personal element in mutual help than at present when so much is said about it. This spirit bound neighborhoods and communities together by ties the strength of which we can scarcely realize. When

See Centennial  
Address.



the field was ready invitations were given, the neighbors assembled, and each one gave his time and strength to pile the logs for burning, for one man or one family could not do it alone. When a set of buildings was destroyed by fire or a family prostrated by sickness, all united to help in rebuilding, nursing the sick, or looking after the crops of those who could not for the time do it for themselves. These services were not purchased as they are now, but were rendered in the kindly form of coöperation, with the result of a great deal of affectionate interest in each other's welfare.

Flax culture began early on the farm, and from the sale of the finished product a considerable portion of the income of the family was derived. It required both skill and hard labor. The seed was sown broadcast in May like grass seed. When the plants were three or four inches high they were weeded by the boys and girls, who had to work barefoot as the plants were very tender. They had to step facing the wind, so that if any were trodden down the wind would blow them back into place. The plants were ripe about the first of July, when the stalks were pulled up by the roots and laid out to dry a day or two in the sun. They had to be turned several times, and this was usually done by the men and older boys. They were then rippled with a ripple comb, which was a

Home Life in  
the Colonies, by  
Alice Morse Earle.





coarse wooden or heavy iron wire comb, with great teeth, fastened to a plank. The stalks were drawn through this comb by a quick stroke to break off the seed bolles or "bobs," which were saved for the next year's seed. The stalks were then tied in bundles, called "bates," and stacked. When dry, the stalks were watered, to rot the leaves and softer fibres. This was done sometimes by placing them in running water for four or five days, and sometimes by a process called dew-rotting; the latter was the slower method and was the one usually employed on the farm. When the leaves were rotted they were carefully removed and the stalks dried again. They were then put through the flax-brake to separate the fibres and get out from the center the hard woody substance called the "hexe" or "bin." This was hard work and was done by men.

The flax was usually broken twice, once with an open tooth brake, then with a finer tooth brake. It was then "scutched," or "swingled," with a swingling block and knife to take out the small particles of bark that might adhere. This had to be done in dry, sunny weather, when it was perfectly dry. Forty pounds was a day's work for a man. The clean fibres were then made into bundles called "strikes" and swingled again. After being thoroughly cleaned the rolls or "strikes" were sometimes pounded or "beetled" in a wooden trough with a great beetle



until the fibres were soft. Next came the "hackling" or "hetcheling," and the fineness of the flax depended on the number of hacklings, the fineness of the various combs and the dexterity of the operator. In the hands of a poor operator the flax would be converted into tow. The flax was slightly wetted, taken by one end of the bunch and drawn through the hackle teeth towards the operator, and thus the fibres were pulled and laid into continuous threads, while the short fibres were combed out. After the first hackle or "ruffler," six other and finer hackles were often used. The fibres had to be divided to their fine filament, the long threads laid in an untangled line and the tow separated and removed. It was surprising how little good fibre would be left after all the hackling, and equally surprising how much thread could be made from that little. The fibres were then sorted according to fineness, and so, after twenty skillful manipulations, the flax was ready for spinning, the most dexterous process of all. It was wrapped around the spindle and spun out in long threads. There was deep meaning in the answer Elizabeth Smith made her son when he undertook to correct her grammar.

On the wheel was a small cup filled with water in which the spinner moistened her fingers as she held the twisting flax. By the movement of the wheel the thread was wound on bobbins. When all the bobbins were full the thread was wound off in



knots and skeins on a reel. To spin two skeins of thread was a good day's work, and the spinner was paid eight cents a day and board.

All these tools of this now forgotten industry remained about the premises at Elm Hill farm for many years, and some of them were there when it was sold in 1873. The remains of the ripple comb, the tooth brake, the swingling block and knife, the hackling tools, the flax wheel and its furniture, were all familiar to the children on the old homestead of a generation ago, interesting reminders of the ancestors to whom the tools had meant so much a hundred years before.

Wool growing did not begin until much later, owing to the wolves which were numerous and troublesome down to 1800. In June, 1783, Samuel Smith's <sup>Notes.</sup> they killed fifty sheep belonging to Captain Morison and his son Samuel in a single night. The town offered a bounty of so much per head for their extermination, and the war was waged against them with such vigor that by 1810 they had disappeared and the wool industry was established on a sure basis.

There are in the history of Peterborough only two recorded instances of depredations by the Indians. Yet it was not until after the war of 1754 that the settlers were entirely relieved from dread of them. The town or the State of Massachusetts had built a fort on the Ritchie Hill in 1750 or 1751,



and when the war broke out in 1754, fear of their attacks greatly increased. About 1756 the town addressed the following petition to the Governor and Council of the Province:

Provincial Records of N. H. *To His Excellency, Benning Wentworth, Esqr., Capt.-Gen.<sup>l</sup> and Governor-in-Chief in and over His Majesty's Province of New Hampshire and to the Hon<sup>bl</sup> His Maj.<sup>s</sup> Council and House of Representatives assembled at Portsmouth,*

The humble address and Petition of the Inhabitants of Peterborough so called

Humbly sheweth

That by the Providence of God we are settled under yo'r happy Government and propose to take Sanctuary under yo'r protection and do our utmost in Subjecting ourselves to your authority upon every emergency; and account that we have just reason so to do, from your care and clemency to other new settle<sup>ts</sup>; and considering the present dangerous situation of affairs, we have been using some means for our safety and defence against the Heathen in raising one considerable Garrison in the south part of the town of pretty large Dimensions, with square logs, Twelve Inches thick, as the bearer can more fully inform. And we design to raise another more large and nearer the Centre Contiguous to our Meeting House where it will best suit, that will accommodate most of the Inhabitants; but this we fier to undertake ourselves upon the Account of the great expense it will amount to, we having laid out, we may say, all our substance in Improving our Land for Bread, corn and hay, to this purpose we have both dedicated our time and money so that we stand in need of help to build & Erect this Intended ffort as well as assistance to Defend it when thus built, and both with yo'r Excellency & Hon<sup>rs</sup> concurrence & assistance; ffor if we should break up that are Barriers to the Towns below us, that is Dunstable &





Townsend they would be as much exposed as we are, so that it would be their safety as well as our own if we be encouraged to continue.

May it therefore please your Excellency & Hon.<sup>rs</sup> to consider the premises & think what a ruining thing it would be to yo'r Petitioners if our time, strength and substance should be lost, and this valuable Settlem't break up; that has been blessed with Such Success as non Such for the time; the Loss would not be made up in some years, if ever in our time. The prevention of which we esteem, in yo'r Excellency & Hon.<sup>rs</sup> power; not that we would presume to direct, not being skilled in Publick affairs, the good Government that Providence hath Bless'd us with, you being our Patrons; But our present necessity & future fears obliges us to Supplicate for help from you, in whose power it is to commiserate such as we fier to be, not that we are under under any slavish fier, for if we obtain our necessitous Demands your continuance & aid, we resolve to continue here & by the Divine assistance acquit ourselves in the cause of our lives & Interest like men while life is granted; and not only confiding but Depending on yo'r Excellency & Hon.<sup>rs</sup> Compliance to our necessitous request yo'r Petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

— HARVEY

HUGH WILSON

THOMAS MORISON

JONTH<sup>N</sup> MORISON

JOHN SWAN

JOHN SWAN, JR.

WILLIAM WALLAS

JEREMIAH SWAN

JOHN SMITH

SAMUEL WALLAS

THOMAS DAVISON

JOHN DAVISON

WILLIAM SMITH

JOHN GRAHAM

JOHN STUART

CHARLES MCCOY

DAVID WALLAS

WILL<sup>M</sup> MITCHELL

ISAAC MITCHELL

WILL<sup>M</sup> NAY

JOSEPH CALDWELL

JOHN TAGGART

JAMES MITCHELL

SAMUEL STINSON

JAMES STINSON

HUGH GREGG

THOMAS BOGLE

JOHN FAUGUSON

WILLIAM RICHEY

GUSTAVUS SWAN



This petition must have been ignored or denied, for it is not known that a fort was ever built on Meeting-House Hill.

All we can say of the date of the erection of the first frame house at Elm Hill is that it must have been before 1759. Five years earlier, William Smith had built and covered with boards his first frame barn. This barn is the smallest of the three now standing on the place, and it stood originally some forty feet north of its present site. Its large timbers (twelve by eighteen inches) are of black ash, hewn, and are as sound as on the day when they were put in place, one hundred and forty-four years ago. The timber in it was cut on the hill north of the buildings. The frame dwelling of which we have spoken was replaced in 1777 by another, a two-story house, built on the site of the log cabin, which was the third two-story house in town; the first was built by Hugh Wilson in 1753, and the second by Captain Morison in 1763. It was two stories in front and one story in the rear. The four front rooms are square and are finished in pine taken from a single tree, the stump of which has been pointed out within the memory of living descendants of the first proprietor. It was on the southwest slope of the Lower Field near the Sand Banks, and judging from its size and from the quantity of timber taken from it, must have been six feet in diameter. The chimney rested on



a stone arch in the cellar. The bricks were made of clay taken from the clay pits in the pasture.

These clay pits were a land-mark on the farm for more than a hundred years; they were filled with water, and in the severest droughts were never dry. We do not know how extensively bricks were afterwards made there, but the ground bordering the pits on the north side was strewn with the remains of the brick kiln and with pieces of broken brick down to within a few years, and no doubt these traces of brick manufacture can be seen there now. The road a few rods to the south of the pits is the one laid out in 1794, and is described in town documents as running "south of and near to the old brick yard," showing that it had been used many years before that date. The place was said to be haunted—by what, tradition does not say—and it was dreaded and avoided by the children for two generations.

Behind the two front rooms of the first floor was the kitchen with a fire-place six feet high and wide enough to burn logs nearly sled length, two feet over, and piled one on the top of another. The children could sit in the corner of it on cold winter evenings while the fire was burning. At this, or possibly a later date, there was a brick oven at the left of the fire-place where the bread and meats were baked, which went gradually out of use as stoves came in. Before this open



fire and in this oven all the cooking of the family was done. Over the fire-place was the pole on which apples and pumpkins were dried for winter use; and at the end of the kitchen was the dresser, bright with pewter dishes. The room was furnished with the necessary tables and chairs and one or more flax-wheels. Here the mother and her daughters lived and worked.

The massive timbers of the buildings, all hewn, show the size of the trees and the substantial methods of building. The timber for the house, sheds and barns (with the exception of the middle barn) was all cut on the farm; the finish, including the shingles, was prepared or shaved by hand. The nails, of wrought iron, were also made by hand. It is uncertain when the house was first painted, but it was certainly before 1814.

It was about this time (1777) that some of the other outbuildings were erected. Probably the first after the barn of 1754 was the cider-house; at any rate, a story connected with it seems to place its construction somewhere near this time.

Life of Judge Smith. William Smith had engaged "Uncle Mosey Morison," the town wit, to build the trough for his cider-mill, and had saved for the purpose some particularly nice plank. His boys objected that they were too long, and he, not liking to cut them, appealed to Uncle Mosey to know if the





trough could not be built without cutting them. "Ay, ay," was the reply. The father looked at his boys with a smile of triumph, and their countenances fell; but Uncle Mosey immediately added, "But the mare maun aye jump the trough." At this time there was a large orchard directly north of the house; the last trees were not cut down until 1840. The west barn was built about 1777, and originally stood at the west end of the first barn. The sheds, one hundred and twenty feet in length, were also erected near this period. The size, finish and quality of the timbers, of hard wood and hewn by hand, mark their contemporaneous construction.

One of the earliest deeds of the proprietors was to John, elder brother of William Smith, of lot No. 34. The deed bears date July 5, 1753, and the lot contains three hundred and ninety-seven acres. The price paid was £97 10s. But William Smith himself dealt extensively in land, and throughout his long life in Peterborough was a large owner of real estate. His first purchase was lot No. 35, and the deed is dated December 15, 1753. It is signed by Jeremiah Gridley, John Hill and John Fowle; it was made in Boston, and the consideration named is £390 "New Hampshire old tenor bills." The description is as follows:

Beginning at a stake norwest corner runs south 52 rods to a hemlock tree, souwest corner, thence east 521 rods to a stake southeast corner, thence north



52 rods to where it began and contains 169 acres and 52 rods and 4 acres to be allowed to rods (roads) and 3 acres for pond, and s'd land lies in the southwest part of the town, and butts west on 92, and on the north 33 and 34 and south on 36 and east on 47, and above s'd 4 acres to be allowed out of the above 169 acres.

It is not known when or to whom he sold it, the Samuel Smith's deed not having been recorded. According to the notes of Samuel Smith it afterwards came into the hands of Moses Morison (Uncle Mosey), his brother-in-law, who conveyed it to Robert Morison. In 1830 it was owned by Samuel Holmes. His second purchase was of lot No. 36, which he bought of Halbert Morison, cousin of Captain Thomas. This deed is dated June 2, 1761, and the consideration named is £50. Halbert Morison bought it of Jeremiah Gridley, John-Hill and John Fowle, July 5, 1751. The lot contains one hundred and sixty-four acres, excepting thereout three acres for roads. The description is as follows:

Beginning at a hemlock tree marked on the easterly side of Contoocook River, North East Corner, running west 275 rods to a stake at the Northwest Corner, thence south 100 rods to a stake at the southwest corner, thence easterly 262 rods to a hemlock tree at the southeast corner, thence north on the east side of the river to the bounds first mentioned, and is bounded southerly on Lotts Nos. 38 and 39 westerly on Lotts Nos. 92 and 29, Northerly on Lott No.



36 and easterly on land of John Swan. The said land at the southwest corner of Peterborough.

He conveyed this land to his sons Robert and John without consideration, probably some time between 1775 and 1780. The exact date is not known as the deed was not recorded. His sons divided it. John erected some buildings on his half, but never occupied them except when at work there, and February 23, 1782, he conveyed his entire interest to Robert for £700. Robert, at his death (December 31, 1795), owned the whole tract with some additions, and it was then sold to Thomas Upton, in whose family it remained for many years.

December 2, 1762, William Smith bought a small tract of three acres of Jean McCy (McCoy) for which he paid £1.8s., situate on the Sharon line east of the street road, described as follows:

Beginning at a stake and stones for the N. E. angle s<sup>d</sup> stake and stones stands on the E. side of the Highway and is the S. W. angle of Wm. McCy's Land thence S. 9<sup>d</sup> W.: 56 rods Bounding on s<sup>d</sup> Highway to a stake and stones: thence S. 24<sup>d</sup> W: 8 rods Bounding on s<sup>d</sup> highway to a stake thence S. S. 54<sup>d</sup> W. 9 rods Bounding on s<sup>d</sup> highway to a stake thence S. 30<sup>d</sup> E. 4 rods Bounding on s<sup>d</sup> Jean McCy's Land to a stake and stones thence E. 18 rods Bounding on Sliptown line to a stake and stones thence N. Bounding on s<sup>d</sup> Will<sup>m</sup> Smith's Land to the Bound. first mentioned s<sup>d</sup> Land.



May 3, 1774, he obtained title to the Elm Hill farm. The following is a copy of the deed:

Know all men by these presents that I, John Hill of Boston in the County of Suffolk in the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England Esq<sup>r</sup> in consideration of twenty shillings paid by William Smith of Peterborough in the County of Hillsborough in the Province of New Hampshire Husbandman the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge do hereby give Grant Make over and forever Quitclaim unto the said William Smith his heirs & Assigns forever (upon the following conditions) two certain Lots of Land Lying and being in Peterborough aforesaid bearing numbers three and Sixty Six and they contain together one hundred acres as they are now laid out and they are butted and bounded as follows viz<sup>t</sup> South on number 65 West on Road or Highway—North on lot number four East on the Road or highway—or however otherways bounded or reputed to be bounded with all the profits privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging or appertaining

To have and to hold the same unto the said William Smith his Heirs and Assigns to his and their use and behoof forever and that I will warrant and defend the Same to the Said William Smith his heirs and Assigns forever against the Lawful Claims & Demands of all persons Claiming from by or under me or my Heirs—upon the following Condition that whereas the Said William Smith has been and is Settled on Said Lots but he has not but he has not performed all the conditions of said Settlement Now if the s<sup>d</sup> Smith his Heirs or Assigns shall do there part towards Building a Convenient Meeting House for the publick worship of God and Maintain Constant preaching of the Word of God in said Peterborough upon the performance of these Conditions this Deed is to Abide and remain in full force and vertue but upon failure of any part thereof this deed





shall be and remain Null and Void in testimony whereof I do hereunto Set my hand and Seale this third day of May in the fourteenth year of his Majestys Reign Anno Domini one thousand seven hundred & seventy four

Signed Sealed & Delivered

in presence of JOHN HILL LS  
the words this Deed was interlined  
before signing & sealing

SARSON BELCHER

ELIZABETH LARKIN

Suffolk ss Boston May 3d 1774

John Hill Esq. personally appeared and acknowledged the within instrument by him executed to be his Act & Deed

Before me

JOHN AVERY *Jus Peace*

There is an obvious mistake in the description, but no doubt as to the land intended to be conveyed by the deed. The instrument was never recorded.

The proprietors held a meeting in Boston, December 14, 1750, and passed the following vote:

Proprietors'  
Records.

Voted that every grantee of said Proprietors shall within three months from the date hereof pay his proportion toward the maintenance of preaching in said Town and the assessment made by the Inhabitants for the roads to such person as shall be appointed by the Inhabitants for that purpose. And upon the expiration of three months aforesaid settle his lot or lots & continue & diligently perform his duty upon them. And in case any Grantee shall not pay his proportion or settle as aforesaid the Inhabitants of said Town are hereby empowered to dispose his lot to such other Person as will go & settle immediately in said Town & perform the delinquent's duty.

None of these conditions were inserted in the



deeds of the Proprietors to John Smith and Halbert Morison, nor were they put in the deed to William Smith of Lot No. 35, given in 1753. Nothing in the Proprietors' records affords any clue to the reason why such conditions should have been omitted in those and inserted in the deed of lots 3 and 66 in 1774. William Smith had lived on the latter twenty-three years or more, had erected buildings and improved the land, and the reason of the delay in getting a title is unexplained. The records show his activity in all matters relating to the church, and the traditions of his interest in its prosperity and welfare do not bear out the assumption in the deed that he had been negligent of the duty imposed by the Proprietors' vote of December 14, 1750. The question is interesting, although of little importance, but the reason of the language of the deed will never be known. August 4th of the same year (1774) he, with William McCoy, purchased of the proprietor, John Hill, three lots numbered respectively 62, 124 and 63, containing fifty acres each; they paid twenty shillings. The lots are described in the deed as follows:

Three certain Lotts of Land Lying in said Peterborough—thay bare Numbers sixty-three, one hundred twenty-four & sixty-two—thay contain one hundred and fifty acres as thay are now Laid out—be the same More or Less—and thay are butted and bounded as follows, viz<sup>t</sup> South on the Town line West on the Rhoad or highway North on Number Sixty-one East on the Second division Lotts number



one, two, three & four. With all the profits priviligis and appurtenances thereto belonging.

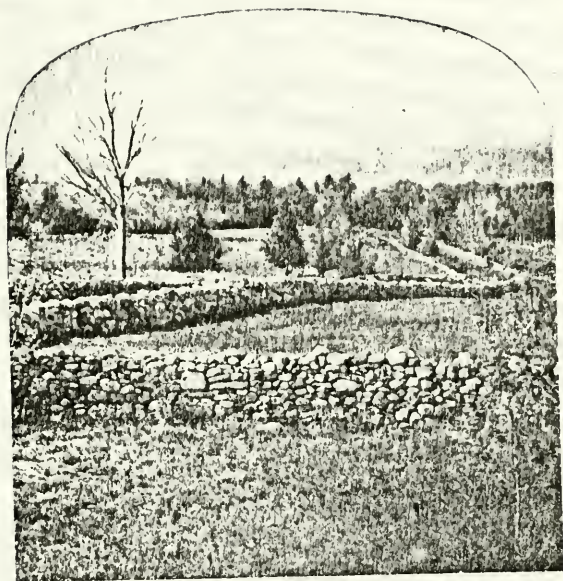
These lots are conveyed subject to the same conditions, to wit:

That said William Smith and William McKey doo there part with other settlers in said Town of Peterborough towards building a Meeting House for the publick worship of God and Maintain Constant preaching the Gospel in said Town of Peterborough & settle an orthodox Minister.

How long William Smith<sup>9</sup> held his interest in this land it is impossible to say, as the deed conveying his title was never recorded. It is not known that he ever improved them. They were afterwards occupied by William McCoy, and John and Dudley Chapman, and later by Kendall Nichols. At this time (1775) William Smith owned about five hundred acres of land. What disposition hē made of lot No. 36 we have already mentioned; but what he did with his other purchases we do not know. Possibly portions of them were conveyed to his other sons. In his will he made his son Jonathan his principal legatee, charged his estate with legacies to his daughters, and said of his other children that they had already received their just share of his property. At the date of the will (1791) they were all owners of real estate in Peterborough and in prosperous circumstances.

The Revolution made no material change in the manner of life of the people. The town sent its full





LOOKING WEST FROM THE HOUSE.

THE GRAND MONADNOCK.





-quota of men to the army; the inhabitants were intensely loyal to the colonial cause, and there is no record of any tories living in it, unless the John Morison who joined the patriot army and afterward, during the siege of Boston, deserted to the British, be accounted one. But few allusions to the war are found on the town records before 1778. In 1780 and in 1781 the inhabitants voted to furnish the town's quota of beef for the Continental Army, and there are two or three other votes relative to filling its quota of men for the service. From all now known it seems probable that for the first two or three years the war was not seriously felt beyond the constant drain of young men to fill the depleted ranks of the army, and the anxieties and sorrows of the families who had representatives in active service. But toward the last of the struggle it was evidently otherwise, and the six or eight years following 1783 were also years of great hardship. The evils of a depreciated currency, the high taxes, the general stagnation of business and the universal uncertainty and lack of confidence in the ability of the free colonies to establish and maintain a stable government occasioned not only great suffering but filled the people with discouragement and discontent. In Massachusetts the dissatisfaction broke into open rebellion. The town, in 1782, felt the stress of the times to such an extent that they declined to make



any appropriation for public schools, although the industry of the place, being entirely agricultural, was less susceptible to the uncertainties and depressions incident to great political and social changes than any other form of activity. But the people bravely faced their difficulties and in time overcame them all.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, William Smith was past military age, being fifty-two years old. He was by temper and disposition a man of peace, and the profession of arms had no attractions for him, although he had done military duty when a younger man. But he was strongly loyal to the American cause, and if he did not enter the army himself, was represented there by all of his sons who were of military age. Their service is here given, as found in the Provincial records:

Robert Smith, in Captain Joseph Parker's company of Colonel Wyman's regiment, raised out of Colonel Enoch Hale's regiment. Joined the Northern Army at Ticonderoga to serve five months. Mustered out and paid July 18, 1776. Paid £10. 2s. September 18, 1776, mustered for one month's service, for which he was paid £6. for two hundred and thirty miles' travel, and £1. 18s. 4d. for his time; total, £7. 18s. 4d.

John Smith, Jr., in Captain Peter Coffin's company of minute men, raised pursuant to an order by Committee of Safety, dated October 12, 1775. Mustered November 24, 1775. Joined the army at Cam-



bridge. Served two months and twenty-three days. Paid £5. 12s. 10d.

James Smith, in Captain Alexander Robbe's company, which marched from Peterborough on an alarm June 29, 1777, and returned July 3, 1777. Length of service, five days. This company was started to reinforce the garrison at Ticonderoga. It marched part of the way and was then ordered back. He was paid £1. 15s. for his service.

Life of Jeremiah Smith ran away to enlist and Judge Smith. offered himself to Capt. Joseph Parker at New Ipswich in the summer of 1777, as a recruit. Captain Parker refused to take him until he had seen his father, with whom he was acquainted. William Smith gave his consent on the condition that if the regiment was ordered into action Jeremiah should be detailed for some safe duty at the rear. To this Captain Parker agreed, and kept his word; but the boy disobeyed, and in the midst of the battle of Bennington was found fighting by his captain's side. When called to account for this disobedience of orders he replied, "Oh, sir, I thought it my duty to follow my captain." He was the only one of the four sons who took part in any engagement, and was slightly wounded by a musket ball in the throat, but suffered no other injury.

What William Smith did in aid of the patriot cause will be given in the following chapter.



## CHAPTER V.

### WILLIAM SMITH—PUBLIC SERVICES.

A COMMITTEE chosen by the settlers governed the town until the year of its incorporation (1760). At a meeting in Boston, December 14, 1750, the Proprietors passed the vote given on a following page. The inefficiency of such an administration by such agencies was quickly felt and proved a hindrance to the growth of the settlement. The committees, notwithstanding their powers, were little more than middle-men. They could advise and vote, but their authority to enforce their decrees, though it was all the Proprietors could give them, was entirely insufficient. They could not assess and collect taxes by authority of law, and payments into the public treasury were mere voluntary contributions. There is no record or tradition that they ever asserted the authority conferred upon them by the Proprietors' vote, but the petition for incorporation (see Doctor Smith's History, pp. 19, 20) is a pathetic statement of their difficulties and of the necessity of a charter.

There is no way of ascertaining who composed





these committees, nor what they did, save what can be inferred from the situation as revealed by the action of town-meetings for the two or three years following 1760. Public worship was maintained, however, and a few highways were partially or wholly built.

The Proprietors' vote of December 4, 1738 (see p. 26), had ordered the street road cleared to the meeting-house, and in 1760 it was so far graded as to be in a passable condition. It was five rods wide and ran through the center of the town from south to north. Going south from William Smith's lot it went straight over the hill east of the McCoy place (now owned by George S. Morison) and crossed the Town Line Brook some distance to the east of the present bridge. It was the only road from Peterborough to Townsend, and by it all the Lunenburg immigrants entered the town. It was changed from its original to its present location by a vote in town-meeting passed May 16, 1796. Only one other road concerns us here, and that is the one which began at the southeast corner of lot No. 3 (William Smith's). This way ran west along the southern boundary of the lot and over to the Ritchie Hill, whether to the river is not known. It had been projected, and partially, at least, built before the incorporation, for we find that at a town-meeting held November 18, 1760, the settlers voted

Town Records.



to lay out a number of highways, among them this one. It was two and one-half rods wide. It was used until 1794, when it was closed and a new one Town Records. laid out as a substitute, running from the "street road" opposite William Smith's house by the south side of his buildings in a westerly direction and down the hill through the center of his farm. At the foot of the hill it turned to the southwest and struck the older road at the southwest corner of lot No. 3. This road in turn was replaced in Town Records. 1814 by a new one beginning at the street road where the McCoy house now stands, which is still in use. The first road can still be traced through the pasture of the Elm Hill farm by the remains of the stonewalls which bordered it. The second was the cart road from William Smith's farm-house to the woods and pastures, and was used by his descendants as long as they owned the farm. A portion of it is still in use.

At the first town-meeting in 1760, Hugh Wilson was moderator. He probably had been, and for a number of years thereafter certainly was, a prominent man in the town and filled many of its highest offices. He was Justice of the Peace for several Samuel Smith's years. At the outbreak of the Revolu- Notes. tionary War he went to Colerain and thence to Uxbridge, Massachusetts. We hear of him later at Haverhill, New Hampshire, Newbury, Tops-



ham and Fairfax, Vermont, and later still in Canada where he died in 1798, of small-pox. It is probable that William Smith also had taken part in town affairs before the incorporation, but to what extent we do not know. At the first meeting of the voters after the charter was granted (January, 1760), he was one of three selected to settle affairs with the last of the committees chosen according to the Proprietors' vote of 1738; and this included an investigation into the transactions of the old board in the conduct of church affairs, the pay of the ministers, the building and repair of highways, the maintenance of schools, the collection and expenditure of public moneys, and many other details. The records are silent as to what adjustment the three made with the old board, and there is no subsequent reference to the matter in the town records. The other two members of the committee were Alexander Robbe and Samuel Mitchell.

Town Records. At the same meeting (January, 1760) William Smith, William McNee and John Robbe were appointed "to invite regular ministers to preach this year," the town having no settled minister until 1766; we may suppose the duty imposed upon this committee called for the same exercise of tact and good judgment that it does now. The church elected William Smith titling-man in 1764. The office was considered one of dignity and importance, and was



always given to a man of character and influence. It was the duty of the tithing-man to preserve order during church service, enforce due observance of the Sabbath, and report any cases of disorderly conduct.

The little community kept close watch over its public servants, and no official delinquency was long suffered to go unpunished. Hugh Wilson and Samuel Mitchell had for some years taken up the collection on Sacrament days and had had charge of the moneys thus collected. Dissatisfaction with their management caused the matter to be brought up in Town Records. town-meeting in 1769, and it was voted to require them to render an account of these funds. Thomas Morison, William Smith, Samuel Moore, John Gregg and David Steele were chosen a committee to investigate and report, and were also instructed to collect the money due the town from Mitchell and Wilson. They were also instructed to appropriate the funds to the use for which they were intended, viz: to buy utensils for serving the Sacraments. Possibly this investigation had something to do with Hugh Wilson's leaving town, which he did four or five years later; but the result of the committee's labors is not recorded. It is noticeable that while committees for different purposes were chosen at nearly every town-meeting, in hardly an instance are their reports or acts recorded. Their reports were probably made orally, and the details





and results of their labors deemed too unimportant to be recorded. The records give account of the business transacted only in brief outline.

In the original layout of the town a lot of fifty acres was set apart for the first settled minister. No minister was settled until 1766, when, after many experiments and much trouble, the church called Reverend John Morrison of Pathfoot, Scotland. The town offered him for the first year a salary of sixty pounds or its equivalent in currency, and one hundred acres of land or one hundred dollars; "and if the town gave the land then it was to be free from its obligation to pay the one hundred dollars," say the articles of agreement. His subsequent salary was to be forty-five pounds a year, and when there were a hundred families in the town he was to have five pounds additional, or fifty pounds. The following year William Smith was commissioned to go to Boston to see the Proprietors and ask them to give sixty acres of land to Mr. Morrison, and also "to procure as much more land for the town's benefit as he could." He was successful in part of his mission, Proprietors' Records. for March 25, 1767, the Proprietors voted to Mr. Morrison lots 15 and 78 of fifty acres each, with the condition that if he did not remain in charge of their society for seven years, or died before the expiration of that time, lot No. 78 should go to the town for his successor. Mr. Morrison



was only twenty-three years of age. He was a man of considerable ability, but intemperate and dissolute. In 1771 some of his parishioners, among them John Smith and his nephew, William McNee, Jr., brought grave charges against him and petitioned the Provincial Legislature to be relieved from his support. The Presbytery of Londonderry suspended him not long after, and later he left town never to return.

From this time William Smith took a leading part in town affairs. He was elected Town Records. part in town affairs. He was elected Town Counsellor in 1766; Selectman in 1761, '67, '69, 1771, '72, '73, '77, '78, and 1782; Treasurer in 1774, '75, and '77; Tithing-man in 1764 and 1774; Town Clerk and Assessor in 1782; and Moderator in 1775 and 1779. Besides these offices he was chosen to preside at many special meetings. With John Swan he was commissioned by the Provincial Assembly of the state in 1768 to take an inventory of Peterborough Slip (Sharon), and the Assembly voted them two pounds eight shillings each in compensation for the service. It does not appear that he held any elective office after 1782. In 1785 his son Robert was chosen Selectman, and for the next forty years one or another of his sons or grandsons was elected to some town office nearly every year.

His name appears among the signers of the Peterborough Declaration of Independence, with the





LOOKING NORTH FROM THE HOUSE.

THE CONTOOCCOOK RIVER VALLEY.



names of his sons Robert and John, his brother John and his nephew, William McNee. (See History of Peterborough, p. 149.) This document was signed by every male citizen of Peterborough, not including negroes and lunatics, save one. This single exception was Henry Ferguson, who was away on public business at the time; he was unjustly suspected of disloyalty in consequence. The whole number of names attached to the declaration was eighty-three. In 1775 he was chosen a member of the Provincial Congress, which met at Exeter. There is no mention of his election in the records. At a meeting held March 28th, there was an article in the warrant—

Town Records. To see if the town will agree to the measure proposed by the Continental Congress in choosing committees of correspondence and what other things that shall be thought necessary for the support of our liberties.

Under this article it was voted, "Aaron Brown, Henry Ferguson, Kelso Gray, Alexander Robbe and William McNee be a committee of inspection the present year say and that Aaron Brown attend the County Congress at Amherst the first Monday in August." The Provincial Congress at Exeter was a state convention, and the Congress at Amherst was a county body. The provincial records show the attendance of Mr. Brown at Amherst and Mr. Smith at Exeter. William Smith took his seat in the Pro-





Provincial  
Records.

vincial Congress May 17, 1775, and was in attendance eight days. The most important action of this body was the passage of the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted May 20th:

Resolved that it is necessary to raise immediately two thousand effective men in this Province including officers and those of the Province already in the service, and that the time from their enlistment continue to the last day of December, unless the Committee of Safety shall judge it proper that a part or the whole be discharged sooner.

Secondly, That every member pledge his honor and estate in the name of his constituents to pay their proportion of maintaining and paying the officers and soldiers of the above number while in their service.

Thirdly, That application be made immediately to the Continental Congress for their advice and assistance respecting means and ways to put the above plan into execution.

Fourthly, That the establishment of officers and soldiers shall be the same as that in Massachusetts Bay.

Fifthly, That the Selectmen of the several towns and districts within the Colony be desired to furnish the soldiers who shall enlist from their respective towns and districts with good and sufficient blankets and render their accounts to the Committee of Supplies.

Sixth, That if it should appear that the above number of men is not our full proportion with the other governments, that the Convention will be ready to make a proper addition for that purpose.

Voted, That the thanks of this Convention be given to the persons who took away and secured for the use of this government a quantity of gunpowder



from the Castle called William and Mary in this Province.

The adoption of these resolutions was as surely high treason as any act of the Continental Congress, and, had the Colonies been defeated, would have invoked the same penalty. They provided for levying war against British Sovereignty and made every member of the convention liable to arrest and trial for the gravest of all political offences. The lives and fortunes of every delegate were thus staked upon the result of the struggle.

As we have recorded, William Smith was Selectman in 1777, '78, and '82. It belonged to these officers to see that the town's quota of men was filled. In the latter part of the war calls for recruits were frequent, and the settlement of the soldiers' accounts began to cause trouble. The town records are so meagre that it is hard to say just how the difficulty arose, but probably it grew out of the bounties and extra pay offered to induce enlistments, and out of the requisitions upon the towns for supplies to feed Town Records. the army. In 1779, William Alld, Jotham Blanchard and Samuel Cunningham were chosen a committee "to proportion what each man in said town hath done in the war with Great Britain and those persons who have not done their proportion, they shall do it." Also, "Voted that said Committee shall proportion according to the time done in



said war, and they shall make return under oath to the Selectmen." The committee had a perplexing task, for, two years later, the matter being still unadjusted, Matthew Wallace and William Smith were added to the committee.

At the same town-meeting, February 26, 1781, they were further empowered "to settle and adjust said accounts so that they may be done in the most equitable manner possible;" and they were also instructed "to make return of their doings to the town for their acceptance or disallowance as soon as may be." The meeting then adjourned until the 22d of the next month, when the committee's report "on the average of the war account" was accepted. The town voted Captain Jotham Blanchard and William Smith one silver dollar a day each, and their expenses, and the other members of the committee four shillings and sixpence per day each and expenses as remuneration for their services. One thing which made the adjustment difficult was the unequal terms of service of the soldiers. Some were in the Continental Army under Washington, while others enlisted for terms varying from a few days to a year, and did not go out of New England, or even out of the state.

Early in 1781, a draft was made on the town for ten men for the Continental Army. There was an evident belief on the part of the voters that



the town had already furnished more than its quota, and so at a meeting held in February of that year they chose Captain Jotham Blanchard a commissioner to go to headquarters and ascertain how many men "the town hath already in the service during the war or for three years," and voted to place in his hands the sum of two thousand four hundred dollars, but whether for expenses or to fill quota does not appear. Captain Samuel Cunningham, Lieutenant Matthew Wallace and William Smith were appointed a committee to draw up some instructions to Captain Blanchard. This action seems to have been thought ill-advised, for at an adjournment of the meeting held on the 26th of the same month the appointment of Blanchard was revoked, and Samuel Moore was chosen to find out "how many men Peterborough hath in the war." The final outcome of the matter is not recorded.

From 1778 to 1783 questions relating to the war occupied a prominent place in the town-meetings, and indicate the perplexities borne by the town during that trying period. Much of its action bears strong analogy to the proceedings during the latter part of the great Civil War, and shows how history repeats itself in great crises as well as in small.

Town Records. In 1781 it was voted "to divide the town into four equal parts according to polls and estate in order to raise four men for the Continental





Army or for three years." Probably this was the number of men found due from the town under the call issued the first of that year and which was the subject of the investigation Samuel Moore was Town Records. chosen to make. In March of the same year they voted that "the whole amount of what is due from individuals and what is due to individuals be made into a rate and committed to the constable to collect in the usual manner, and that each individual that has any money to receive have an order on said constable for double the amount of his note which is to be in full." This vote is hard to explain unless private individuals had hired recruits and paid or promised to pay them from their own pockets, and the town had subsequently assumed the Town Records. obligations. In May of the same year (1781) the town "voted ten pounds yearly to such of their men that is now enlisted during the war or for three years for the town of Peterborough." In the following June they instructed "the Selectmen to assess the polls and estates of the Inhabitants of Peterborough after the rate of five pounds hard money per hundred weight of Continental Beef now called for from this town, or paper money equal thereto."

In 1782, the burden of the war still pressing Town Records. heavily, the town voted "not to pay the soldiers anything for this year," and also refused to



appropriate any money for schools. Two years later Town Records. they voted "not to pay the annual security that the Selectmen gave in 1782 to the soldiers or their order that served for the town of Peterborough in the Continental Army." The reason for this action is not stated. Possibly the soldiers had sold these securities or orders which had passed into the hands of speculators who had bought them at a heavy discount on speculation. But in 1785 Town Records. they appointed a committee "to settle with the soldiers that served for the town of Peterborough according to the directions that they, the committee, shall receive from the town." These instructions are not stated in the records. The matter drifted along until the following year, when the committee were directed to make out the amount due from the town to the soldiers and lay it before the voters. This committee made its report, the town allowed interest on the sum found due, and they were probably paid. No further mention of war claims is made in the town records, and this action was probably the closing scene of the long, exciting and burdensome drama.

The state had, in 1776, adopted a provisional form of government, but it was soon found to operate unsatisfactorily. The many efforts to draw up an instrument which would meet with the approval of the people is reflected through the records of the



town-meetings for several years beginning with 1779. In that year a convention at Concord revised the Constitution of 1776 and submitted the results of its labors to the several towns for their approval. It (the revised Constitution) came before the voters of Peterborough at a meeting held August 30, 1779, and Town Records. was accepted by them in a vote of 26 to 2; but it was rejected by a majority of the other towns. Another constitutional convention met in 1781, and its sessions, nine in all, extended over a period of two years. Late in 1771 the revised instrument was sent to the people, with a circular requesting the several towns to state their objections to it distinctly and make return thereof at a fixed time. It came before the voters in 1782. At a meeting held January 17th of that year there was an article in the warrant—

Town Records. To see if the town will accept the plan of government sent out by the Convention at Concord and vote the same and if the major part of the town approve or disapprove of the whole or any part thereof they are desired to give in their objections therefor.

There was an article in the same warrant—

To see if the town will choose a committee to examine the above plan of government and lay it before the town for their acceptance or not acceptance.

Town Records. The town voted, 36 to 0, to reject it, and chose a committee "to examine said plan, make



amendments and report." "Capt. Jotham Blanchard, William Smith, Esq., Matthew Wallace, John Morison, Esq., Capt. Alex Robbe, Capt. David Steele and Samuel Moore were appointed the committee." They were instructed to report at an adjourned meeting to be held four days later, when they told the town they had been unable to agree. The duty devolving upon this committee was the gravest problem which can come before a free people—that of framing a plan of government under which they desired to live. It is evident they had clear and positive views of constitutional questions, and it would be exceedingly interesting to know the points on which they were divided, but here again the records are silent. Another committee was at once chosen, which reported at an adjourned meeting held the next day, several amendments, and their report was accepted. The plan was, however, rejected by many of the other towns and recommitted to the convention. A second revision was then made, which was submitted to the voters of the town November 26th of the same year. The article in the warrant was—

Town Records. To see if the town will establish this new plan of government as it now stands, or wholly reject it, and if the whole or any part of it is rejected to give their reasons in their return to the Convention.

The subject was again referred to a committee of





nine, consisting of "Capt. Wm. Alld, Capt. Jotham Blanchard, Wm. Smith, Esq., Samuel Mitchell, Capt. David Steele, Samuel Moore, Capt. Thomas Morison, Capt. Alex. Robbe, and Capt. Samuel Cunningham." The meeting was then adjourned until December 15th, and again until December 16th, when the committee submitted their conclusions. Their report is Town Records. not recorded, but the town voted, 8 to 3, to wholly reject the plan of government. The committee was composed of the ablest citizens of the town, men who had been actively concerned in the direction of municipal affairs for many years, and who had clear and well defined views upon the questions before them. Probably the matter was fully debated both among themselves and in the town-meeting. It would let in a flood of light upon the opinions and political knowledge of these strong and intelligent men if we could have a full report of their discussions; but nothing has been preserved.

The matter continued a subject of interest, and was not concluded when peace with Great Britain was declared in 1783. By a vote of the people the Provisional Government, which expired with the close of the war, was extended another year, and in 1783 a new Constitution was framed, which was adopted and went into effect in June, 1784. The only allusion to this new plan made by the records Town Records. was in the minutes of a town-meeting



held September 2, 1783, when Jotham Blanchard, William Alld and William Smith were appointed to prepare instructions to Francis Blood, the Representative of Peterborough and Temple in the convention, in regard to the address sent out to the towns of the state, relating to the alteration of the eighth article of the confederation referring to the mode of stating Continental taxes in the future. The committee were directed to instruct Mr. Blood to comply with the alterations set forth in the address.

With the close of the Revolutionary War the name of William Smith disappears from the records as a public official. He was then sixty years of age, and his sons were beginning to take an active part in town affairs. Jeremiah was frequently in office as long as he remained there, and had much influence in shaping the municipal action of the town. But aside from the public services already named William Smith had performed many others. He was member of a committee chosen in 1775 to divide the town into school districts; and in the following year of a committee to provide the town with preaching. The other members of this latter committee were Captain Alex. Robbe and Joseph Hammill. The administration of church affairs was an important part of town legislation down to about 1800, when other questions assumed more prominence. The building and repairing of the meeting-house, the selection and set-



tlement of the minister, the amount of his salary, the trouble with Mr. Morrison and Mr. Annan provoked long and hot debates in which he took an active part.

The original (log?) meeting-house was erected in 1752, and before 1774 had been enlarged and often Town Records. repaired. At a town-meeting held May 3, 1774, the town chose William Smith, William Robbe and Henry Ferguson, commiteee to build a new one. They were instructed to advertise "the building of the new house at public vendue to the lowest bidder." It was also voted that "the said house should be framed, boarded, clapboarded, shingled and glazed, and be finshed in one year;" and it was to be forty feet wide and have three porches, one at each end and a side door. The house was not completed for several years. A Mr. Comings was the builder. The enterprise straggled along for two years when the town voted to dismiss him, and at the same time allowed him £30 3s. 1d. balance, and also gave him a further allowance of £30 11s. 8d. At the same time they voted to finish the outside and put windows in the lower story. The matter drifted until 1782, when the town refused to appropriate any more money to repair (finish) the house. Town Records. The next year it was voted to sell the pew ground at public vendue and appoint a committee to prepare a plan of the inside of the house





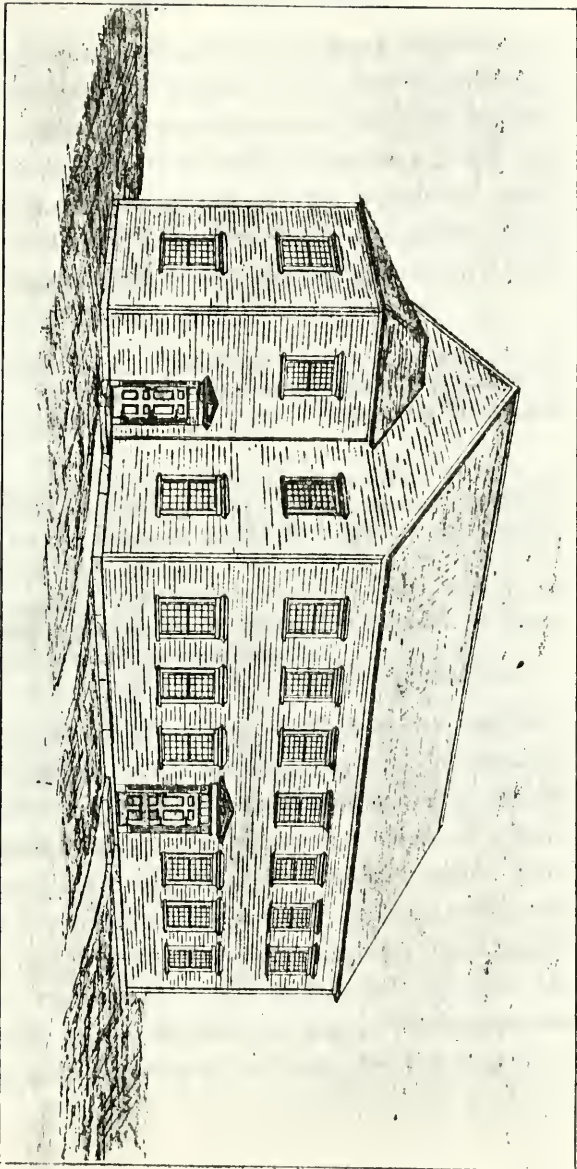




Town Records. and number the pews. In 1784, the town accepted the plan prepared, and voted to build the pews and sell them at public auction. Alexander Robbe, Henry Ferguson, William Smith, Matthew Wallace and Samuel Cunningham were chosen a committee to let out the contract and finish the building. So far as appears from the records, the committee did, indeed, finish the house, though the town changed the plan in regard to the galleries and altered materially the method of disposing of the pews which had been previously adopted. For the next ten years there was less legislation in church affairs.

The first Justice of the Peace in Peterborough was Hugh Wilson, who held a commission up to 1774 or 1775, when he left town. The date of his first appointment is unknown. There was no lawyer in town until about 1786, and the need of a magistrate to administer oaths, acknowledge deeds and try petty offenders was speedily felt. At a town-Town Records. meeting held February 20, 1776, the town voted "that Capt. William Smith be returned to the General Court for Justice of the Peace." The request was duly honored, and on the 11th of the following June (1776) he was appointed and commissioned under the new government. He held the office by reappointment until 1803, a period of twenty-seven years. His last commission was dated





ERECTED 1777.

SECOND MEETING-HOUSE.

REMOVED 1829.



1795. It was an office of much more importance before the advent of a lawyer in the town than after, and until 1786 he executed most of the legal instruments, made the deeds, tried offenders against the peace, and was the adviser of the people in their perplexities and the arbiter in their disputes. His Justice records, in two cases brought before him have been preserved, and are as follows:

Samuel Smith's 1790. June 25th. Jno. McAlaster Jr.  
Notes. was convicted on his own confession of  
uttering three profane curses. Fined six shillings.  
Paid.

June 25th, 1790. Benjamin Adams Jr. of Peterborough Slip was convicted on his own confession of breach of the Sabbath on the 20th inst. and fined five shillings—paid.

December 1787 William Scott Jr. was sworn to the faithful discharge of the office of clerk of Capt. John Smith's militia company.

Before WILLIAM SMITH, *Jus. Peace*.

Jeremiah Smith had a law office in the southeast front chamber of his father's house until his removal to Exeter in 1797. It was in this room, no doubt, that Justice Smith held his court. Those who have witnessed the proceedings in a country justice court can easily imagine the scenes that passed in this room; the crowds of rough men and boys drawn thither by interest in the parties or the case; the loud talk, coarse wit, and the angry debates over the merits and demerits of the case by the respective

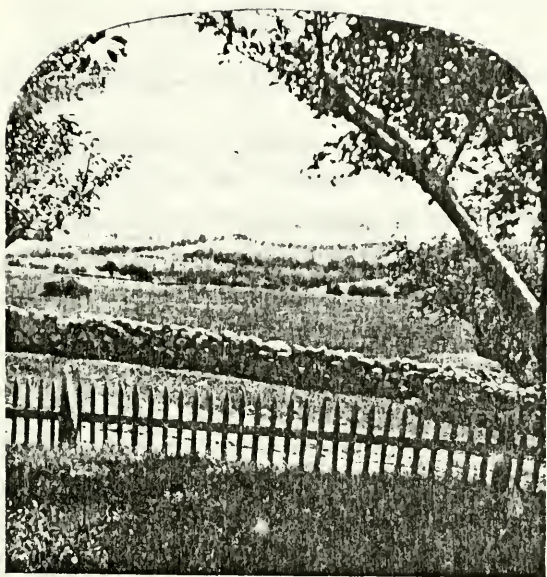


partizans. General James Wilson was admitted to the bar in 1788, and had an office on the same road about a mile and a half farther north, and he and Jeremiah Smith were often counsel on opposite sides. It would be a picture of great interest to their descendants could they see sketched upon the canvas the farmer magistrate in his homespun clothes seated behind his desk listening to the young attorneys as they argued the cases of their respective clients, invoking the judge to execute the law upon the offender, or reminding him that "the quality of mercy is not strained." We may be sure, I think, that the Judge held the scales of justice with equal and fearless poise, and that neither ties of blood nor the eloquence of the advocate swayed him in pronouncing judgment.

At this time all the business of the town was done on the street road, on which were not only the lawyers' offices but the store and the hotel. It was not until 1790 and after that it began to gather around Carter Corner and the river valley near the great bridge.







THE OLD HOME.  
FROM CARTER CORNER.



## CHAPTER VI.

### WILLIAM SMITH—HIS OLD AGE AND DEATH.

WILLIAM SMITH was Justice of the Peace until 1803 and deacon of the church until his death. With these two exeptions, he seems to have retired from all active life about 1791, and prepared to spend the evening of his days in the rest and retirement he had so well earned. He was sixty-eight years of age. For more than forty years he had led a life of unwearied toil, and out of it had come a harvest of prosperity and honor which he could enjoy with the satisfaction which comes from the consciousness of having earned his release from further labor and responsibility. May 25, 1791, he conveyed to his son Jonathan, for the consideration of three hundred pounds, one-half of his home farm. The original deed is in the handwriting of Jeremiah Smith. The following is a copy of it:

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS

That I, William Smith of Peterborough, in the County of Hillsborough, and State of New Hampshire, Esquire, In consideration of Three hundred pounds



lawful money paid me by Jonathan Smith of the same Peterborough, husbandman, the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge have given, granted, bargained and sold and by these presence do give, grant bargain, sell, convey, and confirm unto him the said Jonathan Smith his heirs and assigns forever, an undivided moiety of the farm on which I now live, which farm contains about one hundred and forty acres, and is lot numbered three, lot numbered sixty six, and that part of lot numbered four which is not now owned by John Smith Jun., & John Field. Said farm is bounded West by the land of Daniel Cray; South by Highway; East and North by Highway; land of John Field, John Smith Jr., & John White.

To have and to hold the said granted premises being moiety of said farm, with all the buildings thereon, and all the privileges thereto belonging to him the said Jonathan Smith his heirs and assigns to his and their own proper use and behoof forever. And I do covenant with the said Jonathan Smith his heirs and assigns that I am lawfully seized in fee of the premises, that they are free of all incumbrances, that I have good right to sell and convey the same to him the said Jonathan Smith his heirs and assigns to hold in manner aforesaid and that I will warrant and defend the same to him the said Jonathan Smith his heirs and assigns forever against the lawful claims and demands of any persons.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this twenty-fifth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety one.

WILLIAM SMITH (Seal)

Signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of us

HANNAH SMITH

JEREMIAH SMITH

State of New Hampshire, Hillsborough County on the twenty-fifth day of May A. D. 1791 William Smith



Esquire acknowledged the foregoing instrument by him subscribed to be his free act and deed.

Before JEREMIAH SMITH *Justice Peace*

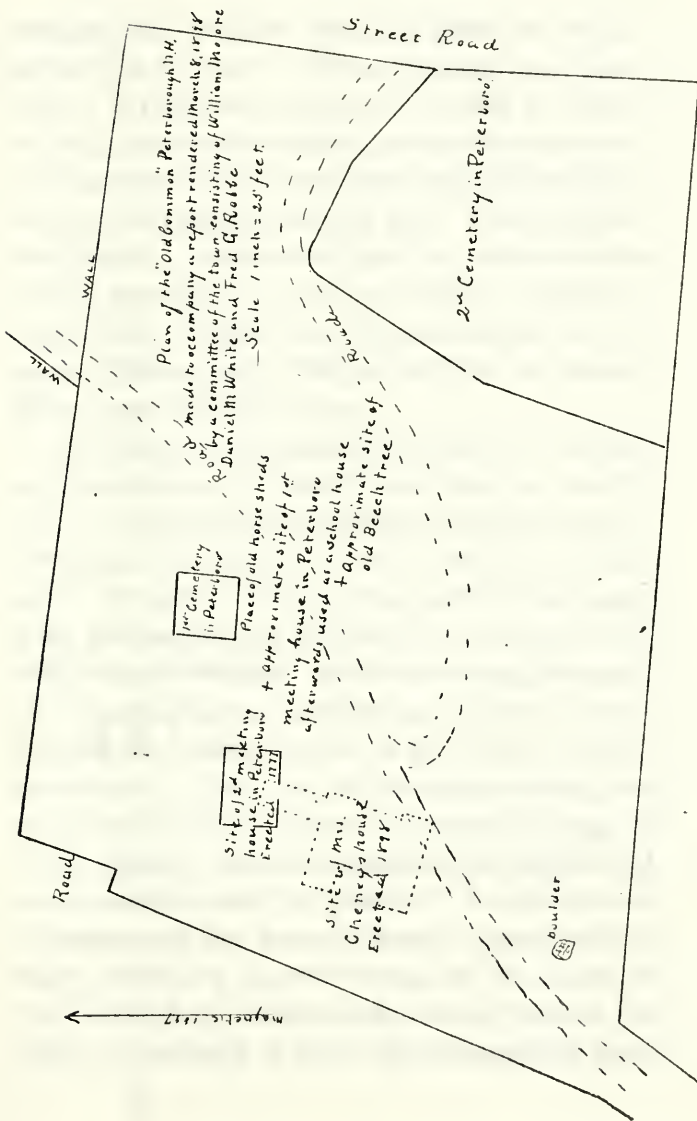
Of his sons, James had settled in Cavendish, Vermont; Robert and John owned extensive farms in town and had families of their own; Jeremiah was in Congress and had a large law practice; while Samuel had already begun his building and manufacturing enterprises which he carried on for so many years; Jonathan, by process of "natural selection," had been chosen to succeed his father on the home place.

Jonathan Smith had always lived at home with his parents, and for several years had been their main stay on the farm. He well fitted by habit and temper to care for his father and mother in their declining years, and the fidelity and affection with which he performed the task are the highest proof of the wisdom of his father and brothers in selecting him for it.

William Smith's duties as magistrate were neither many nor difficult. The one remaining object of his care and interest was his church, for which his zeal never flagged. In 1778, with William McNee, Samuel Moore and Samuel Mitchell, he had been set apart and ordained to the office of Elder or Deacon of the church by Rev. Robert Annan of the Federal Street Church, Boston, and brother of Rev. David Annan, the newly settled minister of the town. He







Plan of the Old Common "Peterborough, N.H."  
 Made to accompany a report rendered March 8, 1878  
 by a committee of the town consisting of William Moore  
 Daniel M. White and Fred G. Noble  
 Scale 1 inch = 25 feet.

Street Road

2nd Cemetery in Peterborough

Drawn by E. W. Stone

+ Approximate site of residence of  
 1st settled minister in Peterborough.



occupied the position until his death, in 1808, a period of thirty years. His son Jonathan was chosen Deacon in 1799, and held the office until his death in 1842, a period of forty-three years, when he in turn was succeeded by his son John, who held the office until his removal from town in 1875. Thus this office was filled for ninety-seven years by representatives of three generations of the same family living in the same house. Three of the Deacons chosen in 1778, to wit, William Smith, William McNee and Samuel Moore, were brothers-in-law.

The church was originally Presbyterian in faith and so continued for some years after the Revolution. Its iron creed and its harsh and rigid views of man and his relations to the world and to his Maker suited the stern nature of the Scotch-Irish immigrant and harmonized with his life of toil and hardship in the wilderness. But the softening influences of increased physical comforts and of a finer culture brought also broader views of man's duty and responsibility. Then came the Revolution, which, like the great Civil War, wrought a powerful change in men's opinions upon all questions theological and ecclesiastical as well as political. The disciple of Rousseau and the devout follower of Jonathan Edwards stood side by side through all the battles of the Revolution, sharing each other's blanket by night, the contents of each other's haversack upon



the weary march, and nursing each other in wounds and illness. The stern Calvinist was compelled to believe that the Free Thinker loved liberty and was as ready to make sacrifices and die in its defence, if need be, as himself; the follower of the new French philosophy came to respect and honor the man, whatever might be his religious views, who was ready to suffer and give his life for the cause they each loved so well. Both were brought to realize that behind all questions of creed and politics, and infinitely greater and worthier than all else, was the MAN himself, and that personal opinions upon this or that theological or political dogma could not obscure or detract from the essential dignity and real worth of the individual soul.

These stubborn facts, born of common perils and common sacrifices, could not be ignored or set indifferently aside. Sober-thinking men saw them and gave them earnest reflection. The soldiers, out of their mutual hardships and common sacrifices, came home with less respect for ecclesiastical distinctions than they had carried away, and gave prompt expression to their new opinions. These things were not often the subject of open debate, but they led to a gradual modification of men's views which, as opportunity occurred, found open expression in official action. The church in Peterborough was not exempt from such influences, which wrought a great change



in the theological views of many churches in Massachusetts and in some few of the older churches in New Hampshire. They first took effect in relaxation from the rigid forms of church government and discipline. Many of the more liberal-minded came gradually to prefer Congregational methods and usages. The Society had originally belonged to the Londonderry Presbytery, and later, through the influence of Mr. Annan, had attached itself to the Presbytery at Walkill, New Jersey; and while after the dismissal of Mr. Annan in 1792, it still maintained a nominal connection with the latter (that is, until it became extinct), yet five years later it swung entirely off, and a large majority united in calling a minister under Congregational forms. William Smith belonged to the progressive party and was without doubt a leader in the movement. He was one of the most intelligent men in the town, generous-minded and humane in his disposition, thinking out fearlessly the problems of the day and eagerly welcoming the new light which was breaking in upon them. In 1795 he united in signing a petition to the Presbytery for leave to settle Rev. Abram Moore. The answer to this petition is not recorded. Two years later he voted in favor of giving Mr. Zephaniah Swift Moore a call to settle in the Congregational way. There was strong opposition to this action from those of the Society who still clung to the Presbyterian discipline, and it had much to do





with Mr. Moore's declining the call. It is significant that in this action the Londonderry and Walkill Presbyteries were entirely ignored, and the town or the church in effect seems to have declared its independence of them and of the Presbyterian faith. Mr. Moore declining, the Society in 1799 extended a call to Rev. Elijah Dunbar, which was accepted, and he became minister of the Society, now securely anchored to the Congregational body.

In this evolution from the Presbyterian to the Congregational faith, William Smith, by virtue of his age, character and long service in the highest lay office of the church, took a leading part, and his sons, Robert excepted, then all living in town, followed his example. His action throughout the matter shows his teachable spirit. Perhaps he did not then foresee the result to which the movement would lead; but it settled the future course of the Society and made its subsequent change into a Unitarian body natural, and considering the character of the principal men in it, indeed, inevitable. It is the first step that costs, and it is strong evidence of the breadth and progressiveness of his mind that at the age of seventy-five years he should lead in so pronounced a change of religious faith. From this time he appears to have taken little active part in the direction of church affairs. With the expiration of his commission as Justice of the Peace in 1803, all business cares and interests were given up, and his



last years were passed in the peace and quietude of the home which he had wrested from the wilderness. His children were near at hand; all were married and had growing families, and were useful and respected citizens of the town. His mental powers survived his physical, although he never became entirely helpless. His mind remained clear to the last. On Sunday morning, January 31, 1808, without any particular disease intervening, he passed peacefully away. It was a fitting close to a long, useful and honored life. The eulogist can add nothing to the impressiveness of the lesson it conveys. In his church record of that date Mr. Dunbar made this entry:

Church Records. January 31, 1808. This morning (Sunday) departed this life the aged and venerable William Smith, Esq. in the 85th year of his age; having been ever since the death of Dr. Peter Thayer (who died Sept. 1798 in his 91st year), the oldest man in Peterborough and the oldest officer in the church, having sustained the Deacon's office many years. I considered him as one of the most pious and benevolent of men, and I doubt not he is gone hence to the Church Triumphant in Heaven.

Two days later, in the same record, Mr. Dunbar says:

Feb. 2nd Attended the funeral of Wm. Smith, Esq. Mr. Miles of Temple was present and prayed. Bearers, Gen. Blood and Maj. Heald of Temple, aged Mr. Duncan, aged Capt. Steele, Lieut. Wm. Moore and Mr. Henry Ferguson—their ages amounted to



about 530 years. The aged Widow McNee (being now in her 91st year) followed her brother's remains to the grave. The family came to New England 71 years ago.

Long before his death he had settled his affairs. His will, dated November 15, 1796, and which was proven at a Probate Court held at New Ipswich, February 26, 1808, was as follows:

I, William Smith of Peterborough in the County of Hillsborough & State of New Hampshire, Esq. this fifteenth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety six do make this, my last will and testament in manner following that is to say—

I order my executor hereinafter named out of my estate to pay all my just debts owing at the time of my decease & also to pay the funeral charges of my wife, of John Scott now living with me, and of myself.

I give and bequeath to my daughter Elizabeth Morison twenty pounds to be paid her in one year after my decease.

I give and bequeath unto my daughter Hannah Barker twenty pounds to be paid her in one year after my decease.

The above sums with what I have already advanced to my daughters I consider as their part of my estate.

I give & bequeath unto my sons John, James, Jeremiah & Samuel one dollar each having already given to each of them their part or just proportion of my estate.

All the rest and residue of my estate both real and personal I give, devise and bequeath unto my son Jonathan Smith his heirs and assigns forever on the following trusts limitations and conditions namely that he my said son Jonathan his heirs executors



or administrators pay all the debts owing by me at the time of my decease & also within one year after my decease pay the legacies aforesaid & shall also support & maintain my wife during her natural life in a comfortable and decent manner suitable for her condition & circumstances in life supplying her with meat, drink, washing, lodging, apparel, physic, nursing, permitting her to occupy such part of the dwelling house where I now live as may be necessary & convenient for her—And also support and maintain John Scott during his life in a decent and comfortable manner. And if my said son Jonathan should happen to die before my wife then it is my will that the foregoing devise to him shall be upon this further trust limitation and condition namely, that the heirs executors or administrators of my said son Jonathan in lieu of the maintenance before provided for my said wife shall pay her out of my estate the sum of five hundred dollars on demand, but in case my said wife shall choose to live with the heirs of my said son Jonathan & be maintained & supported by them & shall not make any disposition of said sum then it is my will that the same should go to the heirs of my said son Jonathan & not to the heirs of my said wife.

And I do appoint Jonathan Smith my said son sole executor of this, my last will & testament hereby revoking all former wills by me at any time heretofore made & notifying & confirming this as my last will and testament.

Signed, sealed, published & declared by the said William Smith as & for his last will & testament in the presence of us who in his presence & the presence of each other hereunto set our hands & seals the day & year aforesaid.

WILLIAM SMITH      L. S.

MOSES CUNNINGHAM

DANIEL GRAGG

JEREMIAH SMITH





No inventory has been found at the Probate office, and we can only infer the value of his estate from the will itself.

He left no letters or writings of any kind. His theological opinions may be gathered from his votes on questions of church administration and policy. We are justified in believing that whenever any issue was presented to him he faced it bravely and dealt with it as a clear conscience and a sound judgment dictated. He had the esteem and confidence of his neighbors and fellow-citizens to the last, and there is no better proof than this that he was never false to those high ideals of integrity and good faith which had guided his conduct throughout his long and busy life.

No portrait of him exists. Not even a tradition of his personal appearance or "descriptive list" has come down to us. We may safely assume that he was a large man, tall in stature, fair-skinned, blue-eyed, and brown-haired; these were the physical characteristics of his sons and grandsons. His sons were large men, and all of them were six feet or over in height.

Concerning his mental or moral traits there is less doubt, for they are clearly outlined in the glimpses we have of him in his own family and in his action on the many public questions with which he had to deal. In social and family life he was



easy-going, but even-tempered, witty and tactful; and in business he was shrewd and cautious. He was not an ambitious man. He never sought office, and he took it only when it came to him through the unsought votes of his fellow-citizens. He brought to the discharge of his official duties rare good sense, a keen love of justice, and a fearless judgment. Naturally conservative, he was slow to form an opinion and equally slow to change one; but having the teachable spirit he kept his mind and heart open to the new light, and intellectually and morally he was a growing man to the end. His life was upright before his Maker and downright before the world. For fifty years his name was a synonym for integrity and good faith in all business and social relations with his fellow-men. The memory of his gentle spirit, his humane disposition and the breadth and sweetness of his character long survived his generation, and was a precious legacy to his descendants.

*FINIS VITAE GUILIELMII SMITHII.*



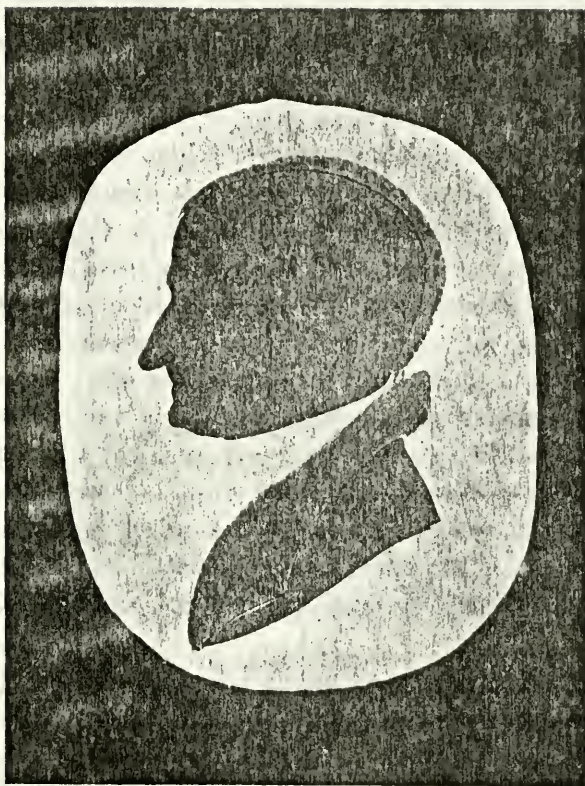
## CHAPTER VII.

### JONATHAN SMITH—HIS SOCIAL AND BUSINESS LIFE.

THE early life of the children of William and Elizabeth Morison Smith, and the influences which molded and educated them, have been imperfectly outlined in the preceding chapters. All the sons except Jonathan left home upon attaining their majority. Jeremiah, from his "intense love of knowledge," was the happy one selected to be educated for a profession. John attended the academy at Exeter after he was twenty-one for a single term, paying his expenses with the proceeds of a crop of rye. Samuel was a student at Andover, Massachusetts, and at Exeter. The others received all their education in the schools of their native town.

These schools were very poor between 1772 and 1784. The teachers were imperfectly equipped for their work, rudimentary as it was. Little was taught beyond reading and writing, and that little in a crude and unscientific way. The school sessions were held in the church until 1781, when the town was divided





JONATHAN SMITH





into districts, and it was voted that schools should be kept for equal terms in each district. The five new school-houses, built in 1791 by the efforts of Jeremiah Smith, had fireplaces, but the church was fireless. Of comforts and conveniences they had none, still less had they the apparatus common to the school-houses of even a generation ago. The branches taught were reading, writing, arithmetic, and possibly some grammar, and the text-books were the Bible, the New England Primer, a version of the Psalms and some crude edition of an arithmetic. The average annual appropriation for schools between 1768 and 1780 was about forty pounds. This does not include the expense of private instruction, but it indicates the primitive condition of the school system. There were private schools which were held at the houses of people in different parts of the town, but between them and the public schools there was little to choose, either in character or quality.

Jonathan Smith, the eighth child and sixth son of William and Elizabeth Smith, was born on the 11th of April, 1763. He was a pupil in Genealogy of William Smith. both the public and private schools of his native town, and in them he learned to read and to write a clear, legible hand, and acquired a considerable knowledge of arithmetic. He was a great reader all his life, and his powers of composition



were above the average. He was always able when called upon to express his thoughts in clear, forcible language. He obtained only the rudiments of an education in school. His best and most effective teacher was experience. Under her wise tuition he became able to take part in varied and important affairs; and whether he was called upon to write reports, make public addresses, or figure out profit and loss in complicated business ventures, he performed his part creditably. He was admirably fitted both by character and temper to remain at home and care for his parents in their old age. Less able than his brothers John and Jeremiah, and less ambitious than his brother Samuel, yet in natural ability he was the equal of Robert, Samuel or James; and in all the qualities which adorn a well-rounded, manly character he was the peer of any of the family. He was quiet and diffident in manner, but in some directions unusually intelligent; a clear and logical thinker, and an excellent talker; and he was always ready to express his opinions and advocate or defend the articles of his political or religious faith.

The chief industry of the town was agriculture. Land was cheap, and young men obtained a start by buying woodlots, clearing off the trees, and raising rye. Jonathan Smith began in this way. His first recorded purchase was dated June 28, 1788, when he purchased of John Smith a part of lots 17 and 18 for



forty-six pounds. This land was in the extreme southeast part of the town, and probably extended up the slope of the mountain. There is nothing to show when or to whom he sold it. In 1791 he received a deed of one-half of his father's farm. Though three hundred pounds is named as the purchase price, it is probable that no money passed between father and son, and that the real consideration was that he should stay at home and care for his parents. For a number of years following he was a large buyer of land in the vicinity of his farm. April 8, 1793, he bought of John Gregg in the right of his wife, Elizabeth (Stewart) Gregg, one hundred and three acres next south of his farm, known long after as the "Cady Lot." The price paid was one hundred and twenty pounds. The description given is as follows:

A certain farm in said Peterborough containing one hundred and three acres, be it more or less, being numbered two and sixty five, bounding east and north on the highway, west on Samuel Morison's farm, and south on land of John Gray, and being the farm on which William Stewart now deceased lately dwelt.

The deed is signed by John Gregg and his wife, and by William Stewart and his brother, John Stewart. The highway mentioned in this deed was the one laid out in 1760, and closed in 1794, when the road running west from William Smith's house



through his farm was opened. There was a house and barn upon it, standing on a rise of ground about twenty rods west of the street road. The cellar-hole is visible to this day. The lot was originally purchased by William Stewart, father of the grantors, about 1750. William Stewart was the first man in the town to die, and he lies buried in the little graveyard on the top of the hill. Later, Mr. Smith sold twenty acres off the west end of this lot to Boynton, which left eighty-three acres of the original purchase. August 18, 1792, he bought of James Cunningham twenty and one-fourth acres off the east end of lot 35. It may be remembered that this was the lot originally purchased by his father. The deed says that Robert Morison then owned part of the eastern portion; of whom Cunningham and Morison obtained it, does not appear. December 15, 1801, he purchased of his brother John thirty-three acres from the north end of the Daniel Cray farm, which joined his on the west. This purchase included the lower field where the sand-banks are, and remained a part of the farm until 1873. Daniel Cray was from Concord, Massachusetts, and he had bought this land of Hugh Wilson in 1778. It was about this time that Mr. Smith obtained a title to the greater part of the remainder of the Cray farm. The date of the purchase is unknown, but June 27, 1803, he sold sixty-six acres of it to Josiah Brackett for seven hundred





dollars. October 4, 1802, he bought at a public auction, of John Turner, administrator of John Gray, twenty-two and one-half acres of land for sixty-two dollars and sixty cents. This land was bounded on the east by the street road and on the south by the Sharon line. In October, 1794, he bought of Jeremiah Smith thirty-five acres, the same being a part of lot No. 4 next north of the home farm, for which he paid twenty shillings. The location of this land is not clear from the deed, but it lay apparently on the west side of lot No. 4, for it is bounded east by John Smith's land, south by William Smith's land and west by Daniel Cray's lot. Jeremiah had obtained it of their brother James six years before. He also bought of Reuben Hodgman, September 6, 1802, thirty-four acres off the south end of the Cray lot, for which he paid three hundred dollars. This may have been included in the sixty-six acres which he sold to Brackett in 1803. The mountain meadow lot was bought in pieces. Six acres were purchased of the heirs of John Smith, April 1, 1825, for fifty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents. This was three-fifths of the lot owned by them, and it was on this part that their father met with his fatal accident August 7, 1821. January 15, 1827, Jonathan Smith, as administrator of Ira Felt's estate, sold to John Smith (his son) and Pitman Nay one-third part of the twelve acres remaining for seventy-four dollars,



Samuel and Pitman Nay then owning the other two-thirds. The following day Samuel Nay conveyed his entire interest to Jonathan Smith for seventy-four dollars and twenty cents, and two years later Pitman Nay sold his share to John Smith for one hundred and fifteen dollars and eighty-seven cents, so that the whole lot belonged to Jonathan Smith and his son John. On the death of the former, the title passed to John Smith, who held it until 1871 or 1872, when he sold it to Franklin Field for two hundred and fifty dollars.

It being one of the annals of this piece of ground, it may not be out of place to give here an account (furnished by an eye witness) of the accident which caused the death of the elder John Smith. About five o'clock in the afternoon of August 7, 1821, at a spot some fifteen rods southeast of the oak tree by the brook, Mr. Smith was on the top of a large load of hay, which he and his son Robert had respectively loaded and pitched. They had chained one end of the binding pole tightly to the front end of the cart, and were preparing to fasten the other end, when Mr. Smith directed his son to drive forward to level ground. He was then resting on the load with both knees upon the pole, which he was clasping with both hands. A wheel of the cart ran over a hillock causing the rear end of the pole to swerve around, carrying him with it, and he was



pitched forward to the ground, striking on his head. He was a tall, large man of over two hundred pounds' weight, and was instantly killed. His son James and a neighbor, Moses Gowing, were raking hay five rods distant and watching the cart. When he fell they ran to him, but he never breathed after he struck the ground. A large stake marked the spot for many years. The death of "Squire John," as he was called, was a great shock to his friends and neighbors. The writer once heard the Rev. John Morison allude to the vivid and lasting impression it produced upon his mind, owing partly to the fact that there was a very severe thunder storm that evening about seven o'clock, after the news had gone abroad, and that he, then a lad of thirteen, had been sent on an errand to a place at some distance from his home, alone.

The foregoing may not be all the transactions of Jonathan Smith in real estate, but they are all of which there is any knowledge. It is probable that after 1808 he gave less attention to his farm and more to other things. His ideas of farming were the prevailing opinions of the day, which experience and economic changes have now modified in so many important particulars. Between 1820 and 1828 he raised many heavy crops of rye on the "lower field," and he believed he could continue to raise them indefinitely; an error which was quickly discovered



under the ownership of his son, who always maintained that these same crops of rye so exhausted the soil that much of it would never produce anything afterwards, and were the indirect cause of the sand-banks which ultimately spread over the greater part of the field. It was after a hard day's work reaping rye on this same field that his nephew, James Smith, son of "Squire John," declared that reaping rye was too hard a way to earn a living, and that if there was an easier one he proposed to find it. Soon after he went to New York, thence to St. Louis, where he amassed his large fortune.

Another of Jonathan Smith's ideas was that it was not necessary to plow deeper than four inches, and that the soil was so rich as to be practically inexhaustible. It is easy to see how the farmers of that day were led into this error. The country was new and when the land was cleared most of the trees were burned where they were cut down, leaving a heavy coating of ashes upon the soil, which gave it great fertility for many years. He carried on his farm according to the ideas of the time, and raised large crops of corn, potatoes, rye, barley and oats, and many cattle, hogs and sheep. The culture of flax began to decline about 1790, and by 1810 had entirely ceased, and the raising of wool had taken its place. The land was far more prolific then than now. It produced nearly double the quantity of





hay, potatoes and cereals to the acre, and with far less labor than it has done at any time within the memory of those now living. It was by their abundant harvests that the farmers were able to support themselves. They had large families, but they had many of the comforts and even some of the luxuries of life, and the thrifty accumulated property. But the labor of the farm was without intermission from January to December, and it was at times very severe. The old-fashioned plow and harrow, the hoe, the scythe and the hand-rake, the sickle and the axe, were the tools, according to the season. Oxen exclusively were used for draught purposes. The winter was as busy a season as the summer. As soon as the fall work was done the farmer and his older boys went into the woods and worked there until the spring weather called them back again to the fields. After the harvest, the land cleared of its trees in the winter was burned over and sown with rye.

Jonathan Smith was a hard worker, and as his parents early taught him, so did he in turn teach his children the virtue and the necessity of industry. In the spring of 1808, he took his sons William and John, aged seven and five respectively, down to a field of some six acres west of the barn, which has always within memory of the writer borne the name of "The Gap," no one knows why, and set them to



work picking stones. If their descendants can judge from the number and size of the heaps they left there as monuments of their youthful toil, their task was neither a short nor an easy one. The younger boy in his old age told one of his children how his father promised them a small reward in money for a certain number of heaps, but it was to be paid only in case the Non-Intercourse Acts of 1807-8, which caused so much distress in New England, were repealed. The reward was long in coming, and William was overheard to declare that if they had another intercourse, he should not try any longer to earn money picking stones; it was of no use. It is certain that neither of them ever forgot these stone-heaps.

It was during this period of Jonathan Smith's ownership that the farm was cleared of stones and the fields and pastures inclosed by stone walls. Many of the double walls, some of them six or eight feet thick, were built by him. It must have been some time before this, and was probably about the time he received the deed of the half of the farm, that he set out along the south side of the lane the seven elm trees that have been so long the pride and ornament of the place, and have given it a name. Tradition says it was "when he was a young man," and that he took them from the pasture west of the farm buildings and brought them up to the lane on



his back at one load. All the trees he planted there lived but one, and that stood between the second and third from the road, and was never replaced. When they had attained a considerable size, one of the children, William, thinking that the sap of the elm had possibilities similar to that of the maple in the matter of reduction to sugar, tapped some of them, and it was then that Jonathan Smith administered almost the only whipping he was ever known to give any one of his children, for the trees were precious in his sight. They grew rapidly and became objects of pride and deep affection to every member of the family, old and young, and made the place a landmark to travellers. Cattle drovers from eastern Massachusetts who passed every spring and autumn on their way to and from their pastures in Washington, New Hampshire, were accustomed to say there was no finer place on the road. The writer never saw his own father's feelings more deeply stirred than when one of his hired men said to him, "If this place were mine, the first thing I should do would be to cut down those trees and make a year's wood of them;" but he never repeated the remark in the same presence.

Before 1809, Jonathan Smith gave his whole attention to his farm, working himself with his hired men and boys, but after that he gave it only a general supervision and turned his attention to other



things. His brother Samuel had become deeply interested in manufacturing, and before 1809 had put in operation one of the oldest cotton mills in the United States, the product of which was cotton yarn. The capital of this mill, the "Bell Factory," was fourteen thousand dollars. It was incorporated under the laws of the state. One-half of the stock was contributed by the Peterborough stockholders, of whom there were nineteen, and of whom Jonathan Smith was one. He put in three or four hundred dollars, and probably held his stock until 1825 or 1826. In 1810, Samuel Morison, Nathaniel Morison, Jonas Loring, Nathaniel Holmes, William Smith, Jacob Putnam and Jonathan Smith formed a corporation known as the Peterborough Second Factory Corporation, and built a mill at the South Factory on a site about thirty rods north of the present mill of Joseph Noone's sons. This mill was probably operated similarly to the Bell Factory. Jacob Putnam sold his interest to the other proprietors in 1811, and the other proprietors sold theirs to Nathaniel Morison in 1814. It passed afterwards through several other hands, until November 29, 1849, when it was burned down and never rebuilt. The remains of the old dam and raceway and the charred timbers of the building can still be seen on the old site. How much money Jonathan Smith put into this enterprise is not known. The yarn made at these mills





was divided among the stockholders, and each one disposed of his share by selling it from house to house. The expenses of manufacturing was probably met by assessments. Until 1818, when weaving by water-power was introduced and the yarn was woven where it was spun, Jonathan Smith spent much of his time in driving through the neighboring towns selling yarn to whomever would buy for cash. The mills had a precarious existence for many years, and could not have been really profitable until after 1820. The war of 1812 had a depressing effect upon all manufacturing industries and the price of yarn went down. The tariff acts of 1815-16 were still more disastrous; but four or five years later the mills began to recover. No doubt it was the hard times which caused the Peterborough Second Factory Corporation to sell out to Nathaniel Morison in 1814, and he failed in business a few years later. Samuel Smith had put the Bell Factory into operation before 1809, and in 1812 he began cotton manufacturing on the site now occupied by the Phoenix Manufacturing Company. The depression in business so crippled these enterprises that his brothers John and Jonathan, and his brother-in-law, Samuel Morison, mortgaged their farms to raise money and carry them on, and "for many years," said, long afterward, a member of Jonathan Smith's family, "we did not know whether we



had a roof over our heads or not." The situation must have been a severe strain upon all of them; but when the Phoenix mill was sold in 1823, the mortgages were released without loss, and all other debts were paid.

Jonathan Smith made some substantial changes and improvements in his farm buildings in 1814. The house was then thirty-seven years old. He rebuilt the rear of the main part of it, making it two-stories high with a large room in the middle and a small one at each end on both floors, an arrangement which was less convenient upstairs than down. The roof of the ell was also raised, and a little low chamber put in over the kitchen. The lean-to which was formerly attached to the house at the north end of the west side, and was ultimately used for a pantry and a storeroom, was originally part of a house owned and occupied by John Scott, first proprietor of lot No. 4, and a Revolutionary soldier.

The exact site of this house has been long forgotten, but it must have stood near the ledges north of the Farnsworth house, on the west side of the street road. A memorial of it and of its occupant existed down to 1860 in the shape of several apple-trees which bore an early apple called the "Scott apple," of excellent flavor, and of great reputation among the boys of the neighborhood. The presumption is that John Scott planted the trees, or



that the apple took its name from him. He was the John Scott whose maintainance William Smith, in his will, imposed upon Jonathan Smith. He served several years in the Continental army, and at the close of the war was seventy-five years old, broken in health, and without friends or relatives. He built the little house above spoken of upon his land and lived in it alone for several years. About 1790 he became a member of William Smith's family, and his house was added to the farm-house as before described. It seems to have been an act of respect for a faithful and patriotic soldier on William Smith's part, for there was no tie of kindred, and, so far as we know, no other obligation. Be this how it may, the old soldier lived with them and was kindly cared for until his death in 1798. His grave is next to William Smith's in the family lot in the old burial ground, and the inscription on the stone reads:

Erected to the memory of Mr. John Scott,  
Who departed this life June 6th, 1798, aet. 92 years.

He was a native of Ireland.

He was an honest man, a virtuous citizen, and a good  
member of society.

The inscription was written by Jonathan Smith. It is a gracious task to the writer, himself a soldier, of the Civil War, to recall to mind the memory of this soldier of the Revolution, whose last years were so pathetic in their loneliness, and whose life was such as to make one who knew him best write such an epitaph as this.



Jonathan Smith made no other changes in the farm-house, but in 1823 he built a new barn, larger than either of the others. It stood about forty feet north of its present site, between and joining the other two. The timber used in its construction was cut on Moses Sawyer's farm in Sharon. The shingles first put on were of the best shaved pine and lasted fifty years. It is noticeable that although the barn itself is larger, the timbers of the framework are smaller than those of the buildings of fifty years before, and that they are of soft wood. In 1777 hard wood was believed to be more durable as well as stronger, and all the older buildings illustrate this belief. We may add here that there was no more building or rebuilding while the farm belonged to the descendants of William Smith, except in 1845-46, when Jonathan Smith's son, John, rebuilt the kitchen chimney, making the fireplace smaller and putting in a brick oven beside it. The buildings then covered about half an acre of ground, and the annual repairs were a heavy tax upon the purse of the proprietor.

The wife of Jonathan Smith was his first cousin, Nancy Smith, and they were married at her home near the South Factory in August, 1792, presumably by the Rev. David Annan. In person she was somewhat above medium height, slender, with blue eyes and dark brown hair. In manner, she was dignified and gentle. She had less vivacity than her cousins,





and not so great a flow of animal spirits, yet she possessed a fund of quiet humor and could make upon occasion as sharp a speech as any other member of the family. She was a woman of strong good sense, more than average intelligence, and great industry, doing her full share toward the support of the family. Like her husband, she obtained her education in the schools of Peterborough, and like him she was a devout member of the church. Her membership dates from before the settlement of Mr. Dunbar to her death, May 13, 1847, at the age of seventy-five years. No doubt similarity of temperament and tastes had much to do with the happiness of this marriage, but whatever the cause or causes, it was a singularly fortunate and congenial one. In a letter to one of their grandsons the Rev. Dr. Morison speaks thus of their home :

My associations with your father and with your grandfather's family have always been very pleasant. I call to mind no home which has seemed to me more entirely what an enlightened Christian home should be than that as it was sixty years ago, when it was my privilege to be there a few weeks. The two heads of the house, intelligent, kind-hearted, thoughtful people, admirably adapted to one another, were a happy illustration of what a husband and wife may be to each other and to their children.

The children were as follows:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Genealogy of<br>William Smith. | 1. Betsey, born Feb. 3, 1795; married John Gordon; died Aug. 12, 1845.             |
|                                | 2. Jonathan, born Aug. 15, 1797; married Hannah Perley Payson; died Aug. 10, 1840. |



3. Mary, born May 17, 1799; married Timothy Fox; died May 8, 1864.
4. William, born July 8, 1801; married Elizabeth Stearns; died Oct. 25, 1873.
5. John, born April 17, 1803; married Susan Stearns; died Aug. 28, 1881.
6. Nancy, born 1805; died Aug. 23, 1808.
7. Charlotte, born Sept. 1806; died Sept. 9, 1808.
8. Nancy, born Aug. 5, 1808; married Dr. John H. Foster.
9. Charlotte, born Nov. 13, 1810; died Aug. 10, 1825.
10. Caroline, born Nov. 13, 1812; married James Reynolds; died 1875.
11. Jeremiah, born Sept. 15, 1815; married Sarah Oatman; died Oct. 26, 1893.

Family discipline in their house was gentle and kindly. The father seldom used the rod, the mother never. It is told of the mother that she once had occasion to reprove her son John for some misdemeanor. He lost his temper and declared he would run away. "Where will you run to, John?" she asked. John remembered both the answer, and the calm and quiet tone in which it was spoken, to his latest day. The children were early taught to work and to work hard; but Nancy Smith's strong affection for her children led her to spare her girls hard and heavy tasks even at the cost of performing them herself in their stead; and the father, though he dealt rigorously with his boys in the matter of work, and never favored them as the mother favored her girls, yet allowed them plenty of time for play. The parents inculcated purity of speech, absolute truthful-



ness in word and deed and integrity in business dealings by example rather than by spoken words, and were themselves examples of plain living, high thinking and faithful doing which could not but produce a lasting effect upon the characters of the children.

The children were required to attend church every Sunday throughout the year, and the boys always walked both going and coming. There were two services, and it was past two o'clock before the afternoon service was over. The remainder of the day was spent in the study of the Bible and the catechism, and the children usually committed to memory some portion of the Old or New Testament. Family prayers were held every Sunday morning and evening. Sunday morning, as soon as breakfast was over, they took their Bibles, and father, mother, and children in the order of their ages, each read in turn four verses of a chapter of the New Testament. Guests were invited to read after the mother, employes of the farm or house after the youngest child. The father then read a prayer. Evening prayers were between half-past eight and nine, just before bedtime, and were the same, except that the reading was from the Old Testament, and was by some member of the family. The New Testament was for Sunday morning and was read through in course, but parts of the Old Testament were omitted. Nothing



could exceed the reverence and solemnity with which these simple services were conducted, and they made a deep impression upon the younger members of the family. The custom was followed by his successor in the home down to the time the place was sold, in 1873.

We have already spoken of Jonathan Smith's love of reading. To his generation a book was something rare and precious. Anything that was printed had a value which in these days of cheap books and newspapers it is difficult to appreciate, and was carefully preserved. In the latter days of the Civil War, when the paper mills were giving ten cents a pound for old paper, and garrets were being emptied on every hand of their stores of old magazines and newspapers, some people even going so far as to cut off and sell the white margins of the current numbers, one of his children spoke of this trait, and confessed that even then he could not rid himself of the feeling that it was wrong to destroy anything printed. Jonathan Smith preferred religious books to any other, and nothing delighted him more than to find a volume of good sermons. He was in the habit of reading aloud to his family evenings. "Come, children," he would say when he had brought home a new book, "I have something here that will interest you." Juvenile literature was not, but a book was something in which old and young were ex-





pected to feel an equal interest. This custom of reading aloud was continued throughout his lifetime, and in the lifetime of his successor down to 1870, and it was a great educator. By it the young people acquired a taste for good literature which they might have lacked had they spent their youth in school, even, the writer suspects, one of our high-class schools of 1890-1900, and they never lost it. The writer has now in his library some volumes of Blair and Abp. Tillotson, which belonged to his grandfather, and he has often heard his father speak of his grandfather's fondness for the former, which were read and re-read in his family many times. At a later period, Hume's History of England, Boswell's Johnson, the Spectator and Scott's novels were some of the books read. He was a subscriber to the Christian Examiner for many years, and read it diligently. A new novel by the author of Waverley was looked for with eager interest, and Jonathan Smith the younger had, when he was in Harvard University, a memorandum of the reading of the Waverley novels in the shape of a cane with the names of the heroes and heroines of them cut into it one by one as they came out. In 1832, Judge Smith presented one of his nieces with some of the novels of Jane Austen.

Jonathan Smith carried his gentle and kindly traits into all his intercourse with others. The people of the neighborhood were more homogeneous



then than now. All were descendants of the original settlers and had grown up in the vicinity. Beside their common racial ancestry, they had a mutual heritage of hardship and self-denial, a common religious faith, and to an unusual extent, common tastes and aims. Each knew the family history of all the others for seventy years back. This promoted a friendly and cordial intercourse now gone out of observance and unknown in our New England towns. They were often guests at each others' tables, and in the long autumn and winter evenings frequently gathered at each others' firesides to discuss politics and church and neighborhood affairs over apples and cider. No roof was ever more hospitable than the roof of Elm Hill farm-house, and nothing ever afforded its owner more pleasure than to entertain guests from the vicinity or from abroad. The children were not overlooked in the exercise of hospitality. Both Jonathan and Nancy Smith were much beloved by the children of the neighborhood. It is told of the latter that her election cake had a great reputation among them, and that she was in the habit of inviting them to her house every year, upon the first Wednesday in June, to eat it. The cake is now a forgotten dainty and the holiday has long since ceased to be observed.

Two young girls, daughters of their nearest neighbor, wished to go to the dancing-school, but to their



great disappointment, their parents, from religious or other scruples, refused consent. It came to the ears of Jonathan Smith, and he offered to plead their cause, and he was completely successful in removing the objections. The writer will not soon forget the warmth and affection with which one of these daughters spoke to him of this kindly mediation more than sixty years afterward. A relative lost his property and died, leaving to his wife and young children a mortgaged home, which was soon taken from them by his creditors. The widow upon leaving it besought the new owner to allow her to take away a quantity of manure left in the barn, that she might have wherewith to cultivate the garden of her new home, but he stood upon his legal rights and refused. Upon arriving at her new home she found it there before her, not because her creditor had relented in the meanwhile, but because Jonathan Smith had heard of the matter and had supplied her need from his own farm-yard. Young men trying to obtain an education were objects of his especial interest. One of the most distinguished sons of the town used to tell in his lifetime how, when working his way through Exeter, he one day received a gift of ten dollars from him. Another of these trifling incidents will show that he could parry an affront just as gently and quietly. An Orthodox minister called upon him one day and the two straightway fell to



discussing theology. "Deacon," asked the clergyman, wishing to confirm an opinion by a proof text, "have you a Bible in the house?" His host turned to one of his daughters, saying, "Mr. Pine wants a Bible; fetch some"—at the same time handing him one from the table. The daughter immediately returned with seven.

From the close of the Revolutionary War, as we have before indicated, there was a steady increase in the comforts of life. The farmers improved their buildings and purchased more and better furniture. The mirror and card-table that belonged to Nancy Smith's wedding outfit are now in possession of her grandchildren, and could not be matched in any but the best and most expensive warehouses. The same may be said of much of the furniture of that period that has come down to us. The variety of food also greatly increased. Pork was still eaten more than any other kind of meat, and a great quantity was raised and sent to the Boston market. Bread down to 1830 was chiefly of barley, rye, or corn, oftenest a mixture of the two latter. An enormous quantity of cider was made yearly at the press of Elm Hill farm before 1840. The owner not only made it for himself and his neighbors, but rented the mill to those who preferred to make their own, at the price of eight cents for every barrel made. The quantity drunk is almost beyond belief. Several hogsheads





went into the cellar of the farm-house every autumn, and all that was not consumed during the year was drawn off, made into vinegar and sold. It was on the table three times a day, and the boys drank of it as freely as their parents. It was set before guests at all times of the day and evening. The use of spirituous liquors had gradually declined, and by 1830(?) was limited to the hired men in hay time by most of the farmers. But if the farmers were great eaters and drinkers, they were also diligent workers, and mighty at all kinds of farm labor. Jonathan Smith, like all his brothers, was a man of great physical strength and endurance. Few could equal him in the use of the sickle. He once walked from his house to the East Mountain, three miles distant, and reaped, bound and stooked an acre and a half of rye, returning before night. It used to be said of Samuel Smith that he could reap two acres of rye a day, the work of four ordinary men.

His account books between 1820 and 1830 give interesting information as to the wages and prices of that period. Rye was from eighty-five cents to a dollar a bushel; oats from thirty to thirty-five cents; hard wood, one dollar and seventy-five cents a cord; potatoes from twenty to twenty-five cents a bushel; cider, one dollar and one twenty-five a barrel; hemlock bark, three dollars a cord; hay from six dollars to nine dollars a ton; beef was three and four cents a



pound, pork five cents, and corn from eighty-five cents to a dollar per bushel. A day's labor of a man and a yoke of oxen was one dollar, and a good reaper had one dollar a day in harvest time. At these prices it took a great deal of labor and produce to bring in any considerable sum, yet crops were so abundant that barns, granaries and cellars were filled to overflowing every autumn, and a thrifty farmer was able to give his children a good start in life. Witness the wedding outfits which Jonathan Smith gave to his two older daughters, Mary and Betsey. Here they are, copied word for word from his account books:

## ARTICLES FOR POLLY SMITH, NOV. 1818.

15 yds. table linen	\$4.50	John Baggett's bill	\$16.09
18 yds. " "	7.50	Tuckermann's "	8.50
2 table cloths	5.50	Rufus Ball	1.92
11 yds. no. 20 sheeting	6.38	Proctors "	3.38
22 " " 15 "	11.00	Holmes and Hamer "	16.62
43 " " 16 "	14.62	Thomas Furber "	31.63
11 " bedticking	4.95	Tape and binding	.93
14 " " "	9.38	1 pair candle sticks	1.75
18 " coarse cloth	4.50	1 coffee pot	1.00
22 " woolen blankets	14.74	Miss Pratt's bill	5.00
10½ " bed quilt	7.04	Andirons	12.00
9½ " copper plate	2.08	Tin ware	9.50
6¼ " cambric	3.75	Sieve and dipper	.67
24 " dimity	13.92	Straw bonnet	3.00
3 lbs. no. 12 yarn	2.52	18 chairs	19.50
32 " feathers	10.88	6 "	9.00
30 " "	22.50	1 rocking-chair	3.00
5 " bat.(?)	1.70	Gould's bill	27.00
10 yds. for pillow cases	5.00	Chapman's bill	27.00



Samuel Smith's bill	\$7.47	Bureau	\$18.00
1 coverlid	6.00	Card table	10.00
Jere Spalding's bill	4.67	Toilet table	.75
Nath'l Hastings' bill	37.00	Paid Betsey Ingalls	3.34
Richard Woods' bill	20.67	Moses Chapman's bill	4.50
1 silver spoon	2.50	Jane Annan	2.00
Cavender's bill	4.58	Samuel Smith's bill	1.45
1 yd. silk	.88	Brass kettle	2.25
1 washtub	.92	Dimity and yarn	5.69
Total \$465.70.		Paid Amelia	1.97

The outfit of Betsey Smith is very similar:

ARTICLES BOUGHT FOR BETSEY SMITH NOV. 1819.

William Greenough's		Rocking chair	\$3.10
bill	\$58.10	Work table	3.50
Isaac Davis bill	13.25	High post bedstead	4.00
Charles A. Pierce "	28.12	1 washtub	1.42
Hastings "	28.25	1 trunk	5.00
Miss Pratt "	18.75	Looking glass	6.00
Comb,	.17	Sieve and dipper	.70
Paid Tryphena Felt	.20	Tin ware	8.55
Moses Chapman's bill	8.50	15½ yds table linen	3.88
1 dozen chairs	17.00	16 " " "	6.72
2 tables	10.50	11 yds no. 20 sheeting	6.38
1 card table	10.00	22 " no. 15 "	11.00
11 yds. bed ticking	4.95	1 case	12.00
14 yds " " "	9.38	Cash	200.00
18 " coarse cloth	4.50		
11 " blankets	7.37		
32 lbs. feathers	10.88		
26½ " " "	19.87		
Cotton batting	1.00		
10 yds. for pillow cases	5.00		
48 yds. sheeting	12.00		
10½ yds bed quilt	7.04		
2 coverlets	13.00		
Framing (?)	10.00		
		Total	\$572.09
		Articles taken back	
		1 table	\$4.50
		1 kitchen table	2.00
		1 iron pot	1.00
		1 gridiron and toaster	2.00
		2 decanters	1.00
		3 tumblers	.30
		1 iron candlestick	.25



"It is a good year," said, in 1884, to a summer resident, a farmer living less than half a mile from Elm Hill Farm, "it is a good year for us when we can make both ends meet."

An interesting experiment was tried on the farm in 1826 which deserves a notice here. The government was making an attempt to introduce silk culture into the state, and many intelligent men, among them Dr. Abbott, the newly settled minister of the town, believed it could be done successfully. The government furnished the trees and the silk worm eggs. Jonathan Smith gave the experiment a thorough trial, as did some of his brothers. He set out between fifty and seventy-five trees along the stone walls inclosing his fields. They grew rapidly, and when of sufficient size he procured five or six hundred eggs, and his daughter Nancy, afterward Mrs. John H. Foster, took charge of them. One of the front chambers of the house was given up to her for the work, and there the eggs were hatched and the worms fed and tended until the autumn, when she had about five hundred cocoons, which she wound and spun herself. But it was never woven, for the experience of a single season showed that the industry could not be followed with success, and it was abandoned. The trees were left to grow until 1847-8, when they were cut down for firewood. Two at the north side of the house survived until the winter of 1860-61, when





they were probably winter-killed. One bore white, the other purple mulberries, which were beloved of the birds.

Of the eleven children, two, Nancy and Charlotte, died in infancy, the former August 23, 1808, aged two and one-half years; the latter, September 9th of the same year, aged eighteen months, both of dysentery. Two weeks later the aged grandmother was attacked by the same disease and died after a brief illness. The grandfather had died January 31st of the previous winter, so that there were four deaths in the house that year. Of the two parents, the father was always the slower to take alarm in sickness. He came home late one night in the winter of 1810-11, and was met at the door by the anxious mother with the announcement that some of the children had been taken violently sick, and she feared they might have the spotted fever, then prevailing in the town. He went to their bedside, and after looking them over carefully, said it was quite probable they had eaten too much pork; in which case they would be much better in the morning; and the morning proved the correctness of his judgment. The second Charlotte, born 1810 (ninth child and sixth daughter), whom he is said to have regarded with peculiar affection, died in August, 1825, at a school near Concord, where he had placed her when he was a member of the Legislature.



According to the Scotch-Irish custom, which his father before him had observed, he gave one of his sons, the oldest, a college education. Jonathan Smith, Jr., was sent to Exeter in 1811, at the age of fourteen, entered Harvard University in 1815, and was graduated in 1819. After graduation he went to Worcester to teach, and studied law in the office of Levi Lincoln. While a law student he became acquainted with Rev. Aaron Bancroft, and for a time gave instruction to two of his daughters. Later, he fell ill and his father went to Worcester to take care of him, and was the guest of Mr. Bancroft, which led to many visits at the farm-house by the latter when he preached or attended conventions in Peterborough. He was admitted to the bar and opened an office in Lisbon, New Hampshire, but after practicing there a few years, went to Bath. His abilities and scholarship brought him at once into prominence, and he quickly took his place among the leaders of his profession in that part of the state, among whom were Ira Perley, afterward Chief Justice, General James Wilson, Ira Goodall, and Andrew Salter Woods, for many years a Judge of the Superior Court, and for a brief period its Chief Justice. He was distinguished for clearness and accuracy of judgment and the thorough preparation of his cases. In arguing his cases he impressed his hearers with the conviction that he believed every word he uttered. Chief Jus-



tice Richardson said of him that he would make an eminent judge. More than thirty years after his death members of the Coos County Bar, who had known and practiced with him in the same courts, still spoke of him with the deepest affection and regard, both as a lawyer and as a man. His integrity, discretion and good sense won for him the unfailing confidence of his clients and the community. "He was the best man," said Chief Justice Perley, who was his intimate friend, "that I ever knew." "His character was so symmetrical and complete," says a sketch of him in the History of the New Hampshire Bar, "that it was asserted that he had no quality one would wish left out." He represented Bath in the Legislature and was a candidate for Congress in 1836, but failed of an election. While in college he had a severe attack of typhoid fever, which left him in delicate health, and from the effects of which he never fully recovered. In 1837, his health failed and he went to the West Indies for the winter. He resumed practice on his return, but was soon compelled to abandon work, and died August 10, 1840, of consumption, aged forty-three years.

Three of the other children, Betsey, William and Jeremiah, obtained all their education in the public schools of Peterborough, which had by this time greatly improved, and were often taught by college students. John, the third son, studied at the New



Ipswich Academy one or two terms, qualified himself as a surveyor, and was much employed as such by his neighbors and townsmen. Mary, the second daughter, was sent to the academy at New Ipswich, and while there met Captain Timothy Fox, whom, at the age of eighteen, she married. The two youngest daughters, Nancy and Caroline, were for a time pupils in a private school in town taught by a Mr. Brown, a student of Harvard University. Later, the former was for one term a pupil at Groton Academy, and the latter went to a school at Derry, New Hampshire, and after leaving there taught school until her marriage in 1845.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### JONATHAN SMITH—HIS PUBLIC SERVICES.

JONATHAN SMITH was a man of generous public spirit, and took an active part in public affairs for many years. His early prominence in the church naturally brought him into notice. Before 1799 he had filled subordinate positions, particularly in connection with the schools, in which he always took a *Town Records.* deep interest. In that year he was put upon a committee appointed to take into consideration the situation of the schools. The other members were James Wilson, William White, Jr., Abner Haggett and David Steele. They made a written report recommending the erection of another school-house, fixing the boundaries of the new district and readjusting those of the others. The report was accepted but not recorded. He also served on the *Town Records.* School Committee in 1810, 1820 and 1822, and was a visitor to the schools in 1823. There are no printed or written school reports of that period now in existence, and the extent of his labors



in their behalf can only be inferred from these scant memorials of his service.

*Town Records.* In 1799 he was chosen Selectman, and was re-elected every year until 1805. Candidates were not then named beforehand by a caucus, though political lines were sharply drawn and party spirit ran high. At this time the Federalists, to which party all the Smith brothers belonged, were in a majority in the town, and they so continued for many years. The Jeffersonian party, however, included some able men in its ranks, who were always ready to avow and defend their political faith. Mr. Dunbar was a stout Federalist, and when a parishioner by the name of Robert Clark brought his child to church (July 5, 1804) to be baptized by the name of Thomas Jefferson, Mr. Dunbar performed the ceremony without uttering the name. The Democratic father at once arose and announced the name of his son as THOMAS JEFFERSON, in tones so loud that the whole congregation could hear.

The voting for town officers was not always by written or printed ballot, for in 1802, and again in 1803, the town voted to choose Selectmen by each voter passing before the Moderator and naming his preference for that office. But this method was never tried afterward—at least the records make no mention of it.

While Jonathan Smith held the office of Select-



man his duties were the ordinary routine duties of the position. All the questions growing out of the Revolutionary War, which had vexed the people for so many years, had been settled, and the town was growing rapidly in wealth and population. Church affairs had come to occupy a subordinate place, and the chief questions of town legislation were the finances, the highways and the public schools, then as always requiring the exercise of discretion and sound judgment for their proper administration. From the names and known character of the men who held the office of Selectman from 1800 to 1825, it is evident that the people appreciated the dignity of the position, for they include those of some of the best men in the town,

Jonathan Smith was first elected to the Legislature in 1809, the same year his brother was made Governor. Both were elected as Federalists. Though a new member, his relationship to the Chief Executive brought him at once into prominence, and he was appointed a member of the Committee on Agriculture and Manufactures. At that time the standing committees of the House were only five or six in number, consisting of from five to seven members each, so that a large majority of the members received no committee assignment. The proceedings of the Legislature are very briefly reported in the papers, and it does not appear from



them that he took any part in the debates. He was elected to the House again in 1821, and was re-elected each year for the seven years succeeding. The town vote for Representative is not recorded. It is probable, however, that the opposition to him grew year by year as the party opposed to the Federalists steadily increased in numbers until 1829, when the Jacksonian party elected its candidate to the Legislature. In 1828, the last year he was a candidate, the result of the first vote for Representative was a tie between himself and John H. Steele. As soon as it was declared, a partisan of his went off and hunted up another voter on the Federalist side, and on the second ballot Mr. Smith was elected by one majority.

Journal House Representatives. In the House of 1821, he was again placed on the Committee on Agriculture and Manufactures. The only record of his action is his vote in favor of an appropriation of eight hundred dollars for the promotion of the interests of agriculture and manufactures in the state. The measure was stoutly opposed in the House and excited a warm debate. In supporting it he was true to his Federal principles, and so far as published reports can tell us he was throughout a consistent advocate of all those acts which had for their purpose the development of the natural resources and industries of the state.





In 1822 he appears to have had no committee assignment, but in 1823 and 1824 he was again made a member of the same committee. During these two years he took an active part in legislative proceedings, and his action shows the same liberal views of state policy. One of the measures before the House in 1824, was a resolve for the appropriation of one thousand dollars for the education of the deaf and dumb at the asylum at Hartford. He took great interest in this bill, and the substance of the speech he made in its support was reported in the Patriot and State Gazette of July 25, 1824, as follows:

Mr. Smith spoke of the capacity of the deaf and dumb to receive instruction, of the rapid and great improvement which some of them had made in reading, writing, grammar and geography; he mentioned the case of one young lady of this state, who, after a careful examination of her acquaintance with the principles of the Christian religion had been received into the church, and manifested the sincerity of her profession by the correctness of her life. He contended that the state was bound to provide for the education of its children; that no means of education for the deaf and dumb were provided here; that there was no place in New Hampshire and but one in New England where they could be educated, or taught to reverence God. The object of this resolution was to send them there. Congress, he said, had made a liberal grant to the asylum; all we had done was to receive its benefits. He said he was willing to record his name in favor of the resolve and let it go to his constituents and to posterity.

He was supported in his position by his nephew,



William Smith of Exeter, and others. The resolve passed the House. The resolution was one of especial interest to him for family reasons. His statements to the Legislature were founded upon the cases of his three nieces, Mary, Sarah and Eliza Morison, all deaf mutes, who had been or were being educated at the asylum. His arguments seem trite and common-place now. It is difficult to realize that seventy-five years ago the capacity of deaf mutes to receive instruction was not generally admitted. But his argument out of his own personal knowledge and observation carried the measure through the House.

*Journal House Representatives.* At the session of 1825, he was made a member of the Committee on Banks, and he served on this committee for three years. In June, 1825, while the Legislature was in session, Lafayette visited Concord, and was received with the same demonstrations of honor and affection which greeted him elsewhere. The day before the honored guest was presented to the Legislature (June 21st) Jonathan Smith introduced into the House a

*Journal House Representatives.* resolution, which passed unanimously, "That the Governor be requested to present General Lafayette with a finished map of New Hampshire." The map was duly presented the next day in the presence of both houses. The papers make no further mention of any action of his at



that session except to record that two days after the above incident he introduced an amendment to a bill pending prescribing the method of assessing taxes. The amendment became a part of the original measure.

In the session of 1826 there was a proposition that the state should build a road through the Franconia Notch. He was doubtful of its expediency, and raised the question whether, if built, any assurance could be given that it would be kept in repair. The answer is not given. Toward the close of this session a question of politics came up which precipitated the principal debate of the session. General James Wilson of Keene introduced a series of resolutions endorsing the administration of John Quincy Adams. They were vigorously opposed, and Ezekiel Webster led the opposition. After a long discussion, in which the leading speakers of the House took part, they were laid on the table under a motion from Mr. Webster, where they still slumber. On this motion Jonathan Smith voted with Mr. Webster. He does not appear to have taken part in the debate, and the reason for his vote is unknown.

As far as the newspapers of the time can inform us, Jonathan Smith took a more active part in the session of 1827. One of the leading measures was a bill providing that the property of manufacturing corporations should be taxed in the towns where lo-



cated. An amendment was offered to the effect that the real estate and such shares as were owned out of the state should be taxed there, and the other shares should be assessed where owned. To this amendment he strongly objected, and made one of the principal speeches of the session against it. The following abstract of his speech is taken from the Patriot and Gazette of the following day, July 25, 1827:

Mr. Smith of Peterborough said he represented a manufacturing town, and said he considered the proposed amendment as peculiarly injurious to his constituents. There were six incorporated manufacturing companies in the town of Peterborough. The first act of incorporation was passed in 1808, and the last in 1822. The first five acts exempted the corporate property from taxation for five years. The last act made no exemption. Though the five years had expired no tax had yet been imposed upon the property. The town had not deemed it expedient to tax it. The establishments were not able to bear it. One-half of the property vested in these factories is owned by persons residing out of the state, and a considerable portion of the remainder by persons living out of the town. The town has been put to great expense in consequence of these establishments. School-houses have been built close by them and others are now building, of brick, for their special accommodation, but not at their expense, for these corporations have not paid a cent toward the erection of a single school-house. About three hundred hands are constantly employed in the factories, and they are all of the poorer class of people from Vermont and the remote parts of New Hampshire, and from wherever they may be obtained. The gen-





tleman from Chester says the parents of the children will be taxed for the schools, but it is not so—they don't pay a farthing—it is all paid by the town. Another source of expense to the town is the erection of meeting-houses. The corporations require their hands to attend meeting on the Sabbath. The town or private individuals must provide a meeting-house for their accommodation, and one in fact is building for that purpose at the present time. These parents and children contribute nothing towards it. The town does the whole, and not only builds the house but pays the minister. It has been stated already that the laborers are poor, and when they are sick or meet with an accident that disqualifies them from labor, that minute they apply to the town for relief, and the town must help them or they perish. Gentlemen may state, if they choose, that these establishments will not increase the number of paupers, but the House cannot be credulous enough to believe it. The evils of pauperism exist, and will increase, and the towns where factories are established must bear their increasing proportion of pauper expenses. The town of Peterborough has as yet received nothing from the corporations, but they have expected the time would soon come when some benefit would be derived from them, when they might afford to pay a reasonable tax on their manufacturing capital. The proprietors are willing now to pay such a tax, and the town is willing to receive the benefit of it. Take away from the town the right to tax the property within its limits and you can hardly conceive the excitement it would occasion. He should not be much surprised, in such a case if the factories were burned to the ground. Gentlemen say that shares in a manufacturing company should be taxed to the owners in their respective towns as bank shares are by law taxable. He could not see much similarity between banking institutions and a cotton factory, excepting that both



might be incorporated and the property of the corporation divided into shares. The laborers in the factories were of the poorer class and must be furnished with the means of education and religious instruction. The managers of banks, presidents, directors and cashiers, had been pretty well schooled before they got into office, and if they wanted any religious instruction they could afford the expense of procuring it. Having the care of their own and their neighbor's money, there was not much danger of their calling upon the town for support; but the laborers in the factories were every moment exposed to sickness, and the towns in which the factories were located were exposed to the expense of maintaining them. To illustrate the impropriety of the amendment, Mr. Smith noticed the factory at Meredith Bridge, which was erected on one side of the river in Meredith, while the principal if not the sole owner lived on the other side of it in Guilford. If the amendment should be adopted, Guilford will have the tax and Meredith the paupers. The injustice of this must be apparent, and the impropriety of the amendment equally so. The gentleman from Portsmouth had spoken of the establishment of factories as a blessing to a town; but, said Mr. Smith, could I transfer the six factories in Peterborough with their three hundred laborers to the town of Portsmouth I would most cheerfully do it, and the gentleman would be welcome to the benefit of their labor, the amount of their tax, and the pleasure of their company.

Some of the ablest men in the House undertook to answer him, but the amendment was defeated by two majority. The question is one which has been much debated in legislative bodies since, but the idea he advocated in his speech, that shares in manufacturing corporations should be assessed in



the town where the plant is, is still the law of the state. The speech is interesting from the insight it gives into the condition of the textile industries of Peterborough at that time. The difficulties he described have been seen and felt by every manufacturing community since his day, and the problems discussed are still far from a satisfactory solution.

So far as known, he took no active part in the Legislature of 1828. He was not a "talking member." He was a watchful and conscientious legislator, but generally a silent one, although when he had anything to say he could state it in vigorous English and with a force that carried weight with his fellow members. The newspaper reports of the sessions are very brief and his contemporaries have long since passed away, so that his work and worth as a legislator must rest chiefly on these brief glimpses we have given.

His fondness for books led him to take an active part in all those movements which led ultimately to the establishment of the Peterborough Town Library. He was one of the twenty-two original incorporators of the Social Library, organized in 1792. No records of this society now exist, and all that is known of it is that it continued to 1830, when it dissolved. It had at one time a considerable number of books, and did much to stimulate habits of reading and a taste for good literature in the town, but after twenty-



five years, interest in it began to decline. Whether he was a member of the Peterborough Literary Company, organized by Dr. Abbott, we do not know, as no list of its members is now accessible.

In 1828, the Legislature decided to divide the Literary Fund among the towns of the state for the support of the schools, "or other purposes of education." The question of what to do with its share of this money came before the town at a meeting held April 14, 1829, when the matter was referred to a committee to dispose of. Two members of this committee were Jonathan and Samuel Smith. Their action is not reported, and nothing was done with the fund that year or the next. In 1831 the town voted one hundred dollars out of it to buy books and apparatus for the schools. It took no action the year following (1832), but in 1833 it voted to spend a portion of the money in the purchase of books for a Town Library. A committee of one from each district was appointed to make the division and appropriation of money for the purpose. The members of this committee were John Scott, Henry F. Cogswell, Jonathan Smith, James Cunningham, Hugh Miller, William M. White, Silas Barber, John H. Steele and Moses Dodge. They made their report to the town at the April meeting in 1834. It was written by Jonathan Smith, and the original is now in the Town Library. It is entitled





to the honor of being the first report of the first Board of Directors of the oldest free public library in the world.

## REPORT.

The committee chosen in April last have received the sum of \$118.00, and distributed it according to the vote of the town, \$51.00 to five of the smaller districts, and the residue, amounting to \$67.00, has been appropriated to a Library for the use of the town. With so small a sum your Committee were obliged to purchase small books to the neglect of larger and more expensive works, although they have endeavored to make the selection as useful and profitable to the town as possible. The book case, printing, and other incidental expenses have been paid out of the Bible Fund. The Bible Society, having \$130.00, appointed a committee to lay out this sum in books relating to moral and religious subjects for the benefit of the town.

This money has been nearly expended by the committee and the books placed in the case with those purchased with the money from the Literary Fund. The number of volumes from both amounts to three hundred and seventy. The committee avoided purchasing expensive volumes in order that every family in town might have access to the Library.

It is pleasing to observe that in the short time the Library has been in operation the books have been called for in no inconsiderable numbers, and read with satisfaction, as we believe.

Your committee would take the liberty to recommend to the town to authorize the Selectmen to appoint three suitable persons as directors to manage the concerns of the Library, who shall be required to report to the town annually the state of the



Library and their doings relating to it. They further recommend the appropriation of a part of the avails of the Literary Fund for the improvement of the Library by the purchase of useful publications and the increase of the number of books.

Your committee have agreed with Smith and Thompson to take care of the books and to distribute and receive them, agreeably to the following rules:  
(Rules not given.)

It will be seen by the above rules that there is not a book for each family and person entitled to the use of the Library, but your committee could not well restrict the distribution into a narrower compass.

The Juvenile Library, consisting of about two hundred books procured by subscription, has been placed with the Town Library. Most of these books, having been in use for several years, are considerably worn, and the number is not sufficient to accommodate the young persons in the town, as is very desirable.

JONATHAN SMITH.

Peterborough, April 8, 1834.

With this humble beginning the library became firmly established, and was thenceforth one of the permanent institutions of Peterborough. The records do not show any further official connection of Jonathan Smith with it.

Besides the offices named he filled many subordinate positions; he acted on committees to whom were referred questions of municipal administration, had charge of the highways, built bridges, and participated in the oversight or carrying on of many public improvements. His opinion and advice were



sought, for his fellow-citizens felt that they were always given with an eye single to the public good.

After 1834 or 1835 he seems to have taken on active part in public affairs, and his services upon the committee which established the library marked a fitting close to long and useful public service.



## CHAPTER IX.

### JONATHAN SMITH—SERVICES TO HIS CHURCH.

No sketch of Jonathan Smith would be complete which did not give large space to the history of his church between 1792 and 1830, and to his share in making that history. After his family, his church was first in his thoughts, and throughout his long and busy life he was actively identified with its interests, and sought in all honorable ways to promote its influence and usefulness in the town. He read much and thought deeply upon the controverted theological questions of the time, and few were better informed than he upon the text of the Bible and on the disputed questions of church and creed. He enjoyed nothing so much as to discuss them, and he was always able to state his views with clearness and force, and fortify them with abundant biblical authority. The sermon was the chief topic of conversation at the Sunday dinner-table, and its strong or weak logic was sure to be set forth to his wife and family. The children were expected to remember and repeat





the text, and were catechised as to the subject matter of it during the afternoon or evening. This had been the custom in William Smith's family, and it was continued in all the families of his sons, but with more strictness in the families of Jonathan and Robert, who resembled each other greatly in their devotion to their church. The latter, when he was past middle life, seriously contemplated studying divinity, and was only dissuaded therefrom by his brothers, who thought, and justly no doubt, that he was too old to make such a radical change in his avocation.

Appropriately enough, the first time Jonathan Smith's name appears in the town records is in connection with the church, showing that his zeal in its behalf manifested itself early. In April, 1792, it was voted that "Jonathan Smith, John Gray, Oliver Felt and Samuel Smith pitch the tune, and invite such other persons to join and assist them as they think proper." By another vote at the same meeting, a committee was chosen to "procure seats in the breast of the gallery, decent and comfortable, to accommodate a sufficient number of singers to carry on the singing in as good order as the circumstances of the congregation will admit." This appears to be the first action taken in town-meeting relative to church music. That the committee appointed to "pitch the tune" received no salary goes without



saying, for it was long before the days of paid choirs. In the first years of the society the singing had been conducted in accordance with the Scotch Covenanters' method, that is, the psalm was first read by the deacon and then sung by the congregation, a line at a time. The change from this method met with strong opposition among the more conservative people, and no doubt the votes above cited were not adopted without warm discussion. It appears that some four years before, Dr. Watt's version of the Psalms had been introduced into the church service, and some of the people were dissatisfied. Among some old papers left by Deacon Robert Morison is the following protest, which was probably the outcome of the votes of the town passed in April, 1792:

Whereas, for a number of years past our church rules have been contrary to the Presbyterian order, by which means a considerable number, both of men and women, have been driven away from the word and ordinances:

First, In March, 1788, Doct. Watt's Psalms, against which version we protest, was brought in contrary to order, and human invention used in praising God, and a number of boys and girls tolerated to carry on the praising of God, and not reading the lines, by which means the mouths of the congregation are shut; and singing at noon is practised, we fear more for recreation than for the glory of God; and also that unaccustomed way of ordering church affairs by a vote of the town at large; and also not complying with the Rev. Synod's advice last spring; and also the underhanded manner of taking the Rev. Presbytery from the meeting-house



under a tree to settle the affair of Psalmody; and also the many uncommon tunes used in praising God; therefore we, being very desirous to avoid the forementioned grievances, and also not to be partakers in other men's sins, do hereby protest that our keeping communion in said church shall not be construed as any the least approbation of any of the forementioned grievances, and we humbly crave that this our protest may be recorded in the Session Book of this town for exoneration of our consciences, and that we be allowed extracts thereof accordingly.

Peterborough, Sept. 17, 1792.

MATTHEW TEMPLETON.

SAMUEL GORDON.

ELEANOR GORDON.

Several other names were signed, but crossed off. We may well wonder what these good people would say could they come back to earth and attend a modern church service!

Jonathan Smith led the singing for some years, just how long we do not know; nor has any tradition come down to us in regard to his musical gifts. With the exception of William, who played the bass viol, and John, who played the flute, none of his children seem to have had any turn for music. But the gift, which was in all probability an inheritance from Elizabeth Morison, wife of William Smith, reappeared among his grandchildren, in two instances in a remarkable degree.

The settlement of Mr. Dunbar marked a crisis in the church, and out of it came the division of the society twenty-two years later, when the Presbyte-



rians withdrew and formed a separate organization. The church was originally strongly Scotch Presbyterian, and no division about its doctrines appears until after the Revolution. The war wrought a great change in men's theological opinions as well as in their views of social and political questions; and the church in Peterborough was strongly affected by this change, although no opportunity for any manifestation of it occurred until about the time of Mr. Annan's dismissal in 1792. The differences over church music illustrate the revolution which had been silently taking place. A part clung strenuously to the old forms and discipline, but a majority in the church had evidently come to look upon them as of minor importance.

In 1795, Jonathan Smith voted in favor of giving Mr. Abram Moore a call, and his brother Samuel was appointed to write the call and present it to the next meeting of the Presbytery. The records do not speak of this call further, and it is certain that it was declined. Two years later Mr. Zephaniah Swift Moore was twice invited to settle with them, first according to the Presbyterian form, and then as a Congregationalist. The letter which conveyed the latter call was signed by some fifty or sixty members of the church and inhabitants of the town. Both calls were refused, owing no doubt to the division of the church over the two forms of faith. The





breach had now become a serious one. On the one side there was a minority clinging to the old creed, and on the other a majority preferring Congregational usages. Mr. Dunbar was invited to settle as a Congregationalist. On June 5 1799, under an article in the warrant "to see if the town will give Mr. Dunbar, now supplying us, a call to settle in Peterborough as a public teacher of piety, morality and religion." "Voted to give him a call." The vote was sixty-one yes to twelve no, and Henry Ferguson, David Steele, Jr., and Jonathan Smith were appointed a committee to present it. The church, September 16, 1799, chose Deacon William McNee, Deacon Robert Morison and Deacon Jonathan Smith a committee to unite with a committee of the town to meet Mr. Dunbar and arrange for the date of the ordination, and determine the council to be invited. The town committee selected were John Smith, David Steele, Jr., Samuel Smith, Asa Evans, Nathaniel Holmes, James Wilson, John Moore and Thomas Steele. Two days before the ordination (October 23, 1799), the church prepared and signed a renewal of the covenant, which was as follows:

We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, members of the church of Christ in Peterborough, apprehending ourselves called of God, do, in a solemn manner, and under the inspection of an Ecclesiastical Council, renew our covenant with Him and with one another.



In a humble sense of our unworthiness and dependence on the free grace of God in Jesus Christ we do renewedly give up ourselves to the Lord Jehovah in an everlasting covenant not to be forgotten; and with ourselves our seed after us in their several generations.

And in like manner we give up ourselves to our Lord Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant and Great Head of the Church, acknowledging him to be the Prophet, Priest and King of our salvation, relying on Him alone for our acceptance with God.

We also yield ourselves up to the Holy Spirit of God as our Guide, Comforter and Sanctifier, trusting in Him to lead us in the way of truth and holiness.

In a firm belief of the Great Doctrines of our Holy Religion contained in the Sacred Writings as the only Rule of our Faith and Practice.

And it is our sincere purpose and resolution by Divine Assistance to discharge the duties of Christian Love and Brotherly Watchfulness toward each other, to train up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, commending them and our households that they keep the way of the Lord; and to unite in maintaining the public worship of God among us, and diligently to attend on the Institutions and Ordinances of the Gospel, to submit to all regular and scriptural discipline in the church, and to contribute all in our power to the good order and peaceableness of those Administrations.

We promise to walk in wisdom toward those who are without for the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of Christ, to seek the peace and prosperity of Zion, and to endeavor as much as in us lies to live peaceably with all men.

In a word, we resolve in the strength of God to go on and persevere in the way of well-doing — praying that we may be steadfast in His covenant, and advance His religion in all things. Amen.

The first signature to this covenant is that of



William Smith. Ninety-five others signed it before the ordination, among them Jonathan Smith.

This change from Presbyterian forms to Congregational was a radical step, which was not taken without strong protests on the part of the minority in the church. The objections were based on two grounds:

First, That the church was connected with the Londonderry Presbytery; that it had never received its dismissal therefrom, and that it was irregular to adopt Congregational usages without such dismissal.

Second, Dissatisfaction with Mr. Dunbar's preaching, in that he disavowed the doctrines of the Gospel as held by the Calvinistic churches. The protest was signed by Samuel Gordon, George Duncan, Thomas Davidson, Christopher Thayer, Samuel Gregg, Abraham Holmes, Matthew Templeton, John Field, Benjamin Barker, William Thayer, Samuel Straw, Samuel and David Bunker, Israel Holt, John Gregg, Robert Holmes, Robert Clark, Abner Hagggett, Andrew Miller, Kelso Grey and James Templeton.

As to the first objection, the church had, through the influence of Mr. Annan, been dismissed some years before from the Londonderry Presbytery, and had joined the Presbytery at Walkill, New Jersey, which became extinct about 1798. Since that time it had not re-united with the Londonderry organiza-



tion, nor with any other, and the members could claim that they were an independent church, and not under the jurisdiction of any Presbytery whatever. The second objection was no doubt true; but Mr. Dunbar's opinions were satisfactory to the progressive party of the church, and that was sufficient. These questions were the subject of earnest discussion and no little ill-feeling. The Conservatives held tenaciously to the Calvinistic doctrines of disinterested benevolence, a willingness to be damned for the glory of God, the inefficiency of good works, the utter depravity of human nature, and the supremacy of the devil. The Liberals openly discarded these dogmas, and were denounced as Arminians. This division of opinion would have impaired seriously the usefulness of Mr. Dunbar's ministry and the prosperity of the church had not a large majority of the influential men in it, conspicuous among whom was Jonathan Smith, strongly sustained and supported him in his work. The number of male members at this time was about fifty, and there were besides from one hundred to one hundred and fifty female communicants. The disagreement over doctrines and church government was finally compromised in 1804, when the town voted, at the annual meeting of that year, on the petition of the Presbyterians, that the petitioners have the privilege of the meeting-house one Sunday in the year for the pur-





pose of administering the Lord's Supper according to the Presbyterian form. By the terms of the vote the petitioners were to appoint the day, notify Mr. Dunbar one month in advance, and the communicants of the Congregational faith were to be allowed to unite with them agreeably to the Presbyterian mode. The town voted to pay the minister's traveling expenses if he lived within sixty miles.

Rev. William Morrison of Londonderry administered the rite for the Peterborough Presbyterians for many years. He is described as a large man, with long white hair and a reverend aspect, and a manner of great dignity and solemnity in his administration of the ordinances of the church. He spoke with a strong Scotch brogue. The services on these occasions were very impressive. The church was thronged, and the table extended the whole length of the broad aisle. The communicants were seated on each side of it on long seats. Each communicant brought with him a token, and left it behind when he retired. Usually the table was filled several times. The venerable clergyman stood at the head of it, and opened the service with the words, "I debar from the table of the Laird all liars, all adulterers, all drunkards," etc. The service made a deep impression upon all present, especially the young people, although the latter were not always so subdued by it as to forget entirely the outside world.



The story is told that upon one occasion Ariana Smith of Exeter was present with her cousin Harriet (daughter of "Squire John"), and as the minister pronounced the usual formula, including (as the story goes) the words, "I debar all liars, I debar all malicious liars, I debar all jocose liars," she turned and whispered to her cousin, "You can't come, Harriet, nor any of your family."

But this concession of the town to the Presbyterians did not end the difficulty, and the breach steadily widened. It was an age of intense theological discussion. The preaching of Dr. Channing excited great interest, and many of his sermons were printed and widely circulated throughout New England. When one of them fell into the hands of any of the Smith brothers, the others were promptly notified to meet at the counting-house of Samuel Smith to hear it read. The scene has been described by a frequent eye-witness, who used to relate that the reader would often be interrupted by the strongest expressions of approval, and when the reading was finished long discussions followed, in which the doctrines of the discourse were heartily endorsed. These sermons and discussions wrought great changes in the theological views of these men, and the new ideas spread through the society. The minister, while slower to accept the new light, was drawn along toward it, so that when, in 1820, the society received an invitation



to send delegates to the ordination and installation of Rev. L.W. Leonard, as a Unitarian, over the Dublin parish, acceptance was given as a matter of course. Deacons Jonathan Smith and Nathaniel Holmes were the delegates, and Mr. Dunbar gave the charge to the people. So far as known, this was the first public admission by any one of the three that they were Unitarians. It is significant that on the Sunday following this incident, which was September 6, 1820, the Lord's Supper was administered according to the Presbyterian form for the last time in the church. Two years later the Presbyterians withdrew entirely and formed a separate society.

On the 21st of June, 1801, the church adopted a new creed, embodying the substance of the covenant with the Apostle's Creed, to which all members of the church were required to subscribe. It shows how far the society had already swung off from the doctrines of Calvin. It is as follows:

You believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and in a humble sense of your own unworthiness and dependence on His Grace in Jesus Christ, do give ourselves to Him in everlasting covenant not to be forgotten, and with yourself your seed after you in their several generations.

In like manner you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only begotten Son of the Father, the Image of the invisible God—Immanuel—God manifest in the flesh, who was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and



buried, continued in the state of the dead and under the power of death till the third day, when he arose again, and having ascended into Heaven, doth sit at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, from whence He will come to judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and kingdom.

You give yourselves up to Him as the great Head of the church and Mediator of the new Covenant, acknowledging Him as the Prophet Priest and King of your salvation, relying on Him, the only Saviour, for pardon and justification, remission of sins and acceptance with God.

You also believe in the Holy Spirit of God as the Guide, Comforter, and Sanctifier of the saints; you give yourselves up to Him, and trust in Him to lead you into the way of truth and holiness.

In the firm belief of the great doctrines of our holy religion contained in the sacred writings, you heartily embrace them as the only rule of your faith and practice; and you sincerely purpose and resolve by divine assistance to live as the Grace of God that bringeth salvation, teaches; denying ungodliness and every worldly lust, living soberly, righteously and godly in the present world, to maintain the worship of God in your family; to train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to unite with us in maintaining the public worship of God in this place, and diligently to attend on the institutions and ordinances of the Gospel; to submit to all regular and Scriptural discipline in the church, and to contribute all in your power to the good order and reasonableness of these administrations.

You promise to walk in wisdom toward those who are without, for the purpose of advancing the kingdom of Christ; to seek the peace and prosperity of Zion, and to endeavor, as much as in you lies, to live peaceably with all men. In a word, you resolve, in the strength of God, to go on and persevere in the way of well-doing; to be faithful unto death,





that you may receive a crown of life and enter into the joy of our Lord. Thus you believe; thus you profess; and thus, in reliance on divine aid, you resolve and promise.

We then, the church of Christ in this place, do you receive into our holy fellowship and communion; promise to discharge the duties of Christian love and brotherly watchfulness toward you; praying that both you and we may be steadfast in this covenant, and adorn our sacred profession in all things; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The end of this long controversy came in 1822, when a number of Presbyterians in the town petitioned the Londonderry Presbytery for leave to form a separate society. The Presbytery met at the residence of General John Steele to consider the request. They were waited on by a committee of the Congregational Society consisting of Jonathan Smith, Samuel Smith, Nathaniel Homes, Jonathan Holmes, Hugh Miller and Samuel Moore, who were admitted to the meeting. The petition set forth that the signers had always been Presbyterians, that Mr. Dunbar had been settled by a minority of the church, and that the Congregational Church had organized without a dismissal from the Presbytery; that though they had been admitted to the communion of the Congregational Church occasionally, they were dissatisfied with the connection; and that Mr. Dunbar had changed his theological views; for these reasons



they wished to form a separate society. The committee of the Congregational Church denied every one of these propositions, and stated the history of the church previous to Mr. Dunbar's settlement, appealed to the records of the church and the town, cited the dealings of the church with the petitioners, and said finally that as to the charge of heresy, Mr. Dunbar himself was present and he could answer that. The committee's remonstrance ended with the statement that they objected to the grant of the petition, not on the ground that it would operate injuriously to the Congregational Church, but that it was an uncharitable measure and a breach of contract on the part of the petitioners, injurious to their honor and to the cause of Christianity, thus wounded in the house of its professed friends; but they submitted the matter to the Reverend Presbytery to be decided as they considered the Divine glory and the interests of religion required.

The discussion over the petition and the remonstrance was not reported, but from the well known character of the participants was probably long and animated. The Presbytery set aside the charge of heresy on the ground that they had no right to hear it, but they granted the prayer of the petitioners, and the new society was organized. This rendered any investigation into the charge of heresy unnecessary, although it could have been easily sustained. Some,



if not all, of the Congregational Committee were openly professed Unitarians, and it is hardly probable that Mr. Dunbar himself, after his participation in the Dublin ordination of two years before, would have denied the allegation. With this division of the society, the theological controversy which had continued in it for nearly thirty years came to an end.

Jonathan Smith was chosen one of the Deacons, or Ruling Elders, of the church, November 28, 1799. As we have already said, he occupied the position until his death in 1842, a period of forty-three years. It was an office of more dignity and importance than it became in later years. Up to the passage of the Toleration Act, the church held the first place in public affairs. Its business was transacted in town-meeting like other matters of municipal administration, and its smallest concerns were brought there for discussion. Its offices were always filled by men of the highest character and influence in the community, and they were held in great respect by the people.

In June, 1804, the town voted that Robert Morrison and Jonathan Smith be a committee "to check, admonish and restrain the people in our meeting-house from throwing down their seats after prayer in such a rude, insolent and noisy manner as to become a grievance, complained of by the most sincere



part of the congregation." The explanation of this is, that the pews were square boxes; the seats hung on hinges and were turned up when people stood up during prayer, and turned down again as soon as the "Amen" was pronounced. The prayers were long, and no doubt the less devout let them down at the close with a crack. Probably, also, mischievous boys and girls took delight in annoying a sanctimonious neighbor with the rat-tat-tat of the seats. The old poem describes it:

"And when at last the loud Amen  
Fell from aloft, how quickly then  
The seats came down with heavy rattle,  
Like musketry in fiercest battle."

The authority of this vote in town-meeting and the firmness with which the committee discharged their duty soon cured the evil.

Records of Bible Society. In 1814, a Bible Society was organized in town, which was maintained down to 1833. Jonathan Smith was one of its active members, and held the office of treasurer from its beginning to its dissolution. It appears that the organization of such a society had been under discussion for some time, and a beginning was made on Sunday, July 10, 1814, when a few members of the church met after morning service and chose a committee of twenty-two—among whom were Jonathan, Samuel and John Smith—to obtain subscriptions for the





purchase of Bibles and Testaments. A committee, among whom were also the above named, was also appointed to consider the expediency of forming a Bible Society, with instructions to report the following Sunday. This committee reported:

1st. That they were in favor of establishing a Bible Society in this place.

2d. That pains be taken to ascertain the funds that can be procured.

3d. That as soon as suitable funds are procured, a committee be appointed to form a constitution for the society.

On Monday, July 25th, the committee met at the house of Samuel Smith, and agreed upon the following plan for subscriptions:

Every person subscribing fifty cents shall be entitled to draw a Testament; every person subscribing seventy-five cents, a Bible; every person subscribing one dollar more than he draws out shall be entitled to vote on the appropriation of the charities of the Society."

A draft for the subscription papers was then drawn up, and on the next Sunday they were given out to the general committee of twenty-two to circulate and obtain subscriptions thereto. On Sunday, August 7th, the subscriptions amounted to two hundred and fifty dollars; August 14th, three hundred and fifty dollars; August 21st, three hundred and eighty dollars; September 7th it was ascertained



that nearly five hundred dollars had been pledged, and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution, which reported the following Sunday. The draft was accepted, and the society was formally organized. The first board or officers was as follows:

*President*—John Smith.

*Vice-Presidents*—James Wilson, Samuel Smith.

*Secretary*—Rev. Elijah Dunbar.

*Treasurer*—Jonathan Smith.

*Directors*—For the southwest part of the town, Robert Morison, Nath'l Holmes, Sam'l Morison; for the southeast part of the town, Jonathan Smith, James Porter, James Cunningham; for the center of the town, John White, David Carter, Daniel Abbott, John Scott; for the northwest part of the town, Thomas Steele, Sam'l Moore, Jonathan Faxon; for the northeast part of the town, Abram Holmes, Wm. Miller, Sam'l Alld; for the middle east part of the town, John Steele, Hugh Miller, Wm. Treadwell.

Article four of the constitution defined the business of the President and Directors to be to endeavor by all expedient and proper measures to promote the ends of the institution, viz: the advancement of religious knowledge and sound morality among the rising generation, and for the purposes of charity. The date of the annual meeting of the society was fixed for the Friday previous to Rev. Dr. Morrison's Sacrament, and the membership fee was fixed at one dollar.



Sometime during the year that followed its organization, Samuel Smith was appointed to wait upon Lieutenant-Governor Phillips of Massachusetts, President of the Massachusetts Bible Society, to make inquiries in regard to procuring Bibles of the stereotype edition from Philadelphia. Governor Phillips not only gave the desired information, but presented the society with one hundred dollars, which, in the language of the records, "was an instance of munificent liberality and pious generosity as important and peculiarly grateful to us as unsolicited and unexpected." The following year (1816), the cost of the Bibles having been ascertained (the stereotype edition probably), the price of subscription to the society was modified as follows: Every one paying fifty cents was entitled to a Testament; every one paying seventy-five cents, to a Bible; every one paying one dollar, to a Bible and Testament; every one paying one dollar and a half, to two Bibles. The directors were instructed "to call on the Treasurer for as many books as he thought necessary to supply the subscribers on his list, and account to him for any books remaining, and give him the names of all those who had subscribed a dollar or more, which entitled them to become members of the society, and vote in its affairs and in the distribution of its charity."

The society had some difficulty in getting an ac-



count from the committee of twenty-two of the number of subscriptions obtained and of the money collected. After the delinquents had been twice called on they handed in a report October 13, 1816, and it was found that seventy-four—fifty-eight men and sixteen women—were entitled to full membership. Among the men were John, Jonathan, Samuel, William, Jeremiah and Frederick Augustus Smith, and among the women were Margaret, Nancy, Sally, Harriet, Louisa, Betsey and Polly Smith—all relatives of the Treasurer. This year the date of the annual meeting was changed to the first Sunday in November, and the number of Directors was reduced to seven. It was also voted to distribute ninety Bibles and fifteen Testaments as charitable donations to various persons recommended by the Directors.

No meetings were held from 1817 to 1820. October 14, 1821, the society met for re-organization. In the interval its President, John Smith ("Squire John"), had died, and others of its officers had deceased or left town. Samuel Smith was chosen President, and continued in the position until its dissolution in 1833. A committee was chosen to audit the accounts of the Treasurer and report what disposition should be made of the funds. The committee met at Jonathan Smith's house, and there drew up the following report:

They find the Treasurer's accounts well vouched





and rightly cast, and that there is due him from the Society the sum of seventy-one cents.

They also report that the interest of the Phillips Fund would amount to \$45.25 on the 3d of March next, which they advise should be spent in the following manner: 1st. In the purchase of 250 copies of the Boston catechism (Dr. Channing's) for the use of the schools; 2d. In the purchase of a set of tracts of the Christian Tract Society for the purpose of premiums to those scholars who shall excel at the Sunday Schools in committing to memory the Scripture lessons assigned to them; 3d. That the Bibles remaining on hand be used to form the highest prize, or reward of merit, in said schools; 4th. That a subscription paper, to be furnished by the Secretary, be handed about by the School Agent in each District, to obtain a sufficient sum to compensate the Sunday School instructors for the summer service; 5th. The committee recommend that the mode of reward by tickets, to be reckoned up at the end of the school, and to answer to each holder as so much money and that money to be paid in tracts or books, be adopted by the Society in reference to the Sunday Schools. James Smith of Cavendish has kindly promised to transmit us a written account of their method in the Sunday schools in Vermont. 6th. The committee recommend that the schoolmasters to be engaged for the ensuing winter be contracted with by the agents of the several districts to catechise the children in the Boston Catechism every Saturday noon. 7th. The Committee recommend that the Treasurer be desired to procure immediately 250 copies of the Boston Catechism and to deliver the same (in proportion to the taxes of the several districts) to some suitable person in each district. 8th. The committee recommend that the minister appoint the portions of Scripture to be committed to memory by the scholars in the Sunday Schools, and furnish the instructors with a list of those passages, and of any



hymns or Psalms he may judge most expedient. 9th. The committee recommend that it be enjoined on the instructors of the Sunday Schools to teach the scholars the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the select portions of Scripture, and select Psalms and hymns assigned by the minister, and to teach them the Boston Catechism; but it is not expected that those instructors will comment on the Scriptures."

The elaborate scheme was evidently the work of Mr. Dunbar, the chairman of the committee. The records of the society, however, do not show that it was ever adopted. It was submitted at the annual meeting held November 4th of that year (1821) and "received with approbation;" but owing to the stormy weather there were few members present, and further consideration of it was postponed until the next Sunday, to which time the election of officers was also deferred. If any action was then taken upon it the vote is not recorded, nor is there any further allusion to it in the records. It may well be supposed that a plan so far reaching, if faithfully carried out, would, in the then excited state of theological opinion, excite vigorous opposition. But there is neither written record nor tradition to tell us what its fate was. There is no record of any other meeting of the society until 1833.

When that time came, great changes had taken place in the town. The Presbyterian Society had been organized, and Mr. Dunbar, through the oppo-



sition of the younger members in his society, had been compelled to resign his charge. These events seem to have put the Bible Society in eclipse, from which it emerged in 1833 only to dissolve. At a meeting held November 2d of that year it was voted to expend the funds of the society in the purchase of books, and that the books be on church history, ecclesiastical biography, sermons and commentaries.

“Voted—That this Library when organized, shall, if the town concur, be placed under the management of the officers of the Town Library now in contemplation by the town.” A committee was also chosen “to make a selection of books, to wit: Deacon Smith, Deacon Field, Esq. Robbe, and Robert White.” The society then adjourned sine die.

Jonathan Smith was one of the few original members present at this meeting. He had worked loyally for its interests throughout its whole active life, and now he was chairman of the committee that performed its obsequies and gave it honorable burial. It had exerted much influence for good, and had been the agent for placing the Bible in every Peterborough home. Whatever of success it had had was due in no small measure to his intelligent and zealous labors in its behalf.

During all these years he labored diligently and faithfully for his church. The question of repairing the old meeting-house on the hill agitated the town



for several years. He was one of a committee of the town to propose to the pew-holders (June 11, 1816,) that the town should pay one-half the expense of repairs upon it, and the pew-holders should give a bond to pay the other half. The proposal was received unfavorably, and it was decided to build on some other spot. The location of the new church was the subject of much debate, and a committee made up of gentlemen from other towns was called in to advise. After many surveys, they selected a site about half way between the General James Wilson corner and the old cemetery, on the west side of the street road; but this also proved unsatisfactory. Other committees were appointed, and on one of these (May, 1819) Jonathan Smith served. The result of all the deliberations was the present Unitarian Church building in the centre village.

Besides his services in the business affairs of the church, he was well known as the minister's right hand man. He was a delegate to nearly every ordination and installation to which the church was invited; his house was the home of visiting clergymen; and he was ever the trusted friend and counsellor of Mr. Dunbar. The natural bent of his mind, his extensive religious reading and his firm belief in the church as the greatest factor for good in the community, made him naturally a leader in his own, in which no event took place between 1795 and 1842







UNITARIAN MEETING-HOUSE.

ECTED 1825.

DESIGNED BY CHARLES BULFINCH, OF BOSTON.



that he was not an active and intelligent participant. His growing mind and his openness of intellectual and moral vision kept him fully abreast of the best religious thought of the time, and the rapid evolution of theological opinion always found him in the lead of those who were seeking new light and more reasonable forms of religious expression.



## CHAPTER X.

### JONATHAN SMITH—HIS CLOSING YEARS.

Belknap's

New Hampshire.

"WERE I to form a picture of a happy society," says that old worthy, Jeremy Belknap, "it would be a town consisting of a due mixture of hills, valleys, and streams of water; the land well fenced and cultivated; the roads and bridges in good repair; a decent inn for the refreshment of travellers, and for public entertainments; the inhabitants mostly husbandmen; their wives and daughters domestic manufacturers; a suitable proportion of handicraft workmen, and two or three traders; a physician and a lawyer, each of whom should have a farm for his support. A clergyman of any denomination which should be agreeable to the majority, a man of good understanding, of a candid disposition and exemplary morals; not a metaphysical, nor a polemic, but a serious and practical preacher. A schoolmaster who should understand his business and teach his pupils to govern themselves. A social library, annually increasing, and



under good regulation. A club of sensible men seeking mutual improvement. A decent musical society. No intriguing politician, horse jockey, gambler or sot; but all such characters treated with contempt. Such a situation may be considered as the most favourable to social happiness of any which this world can afford."

This might have been written in 1899 instead of 1792. The writer has always found the picture here presented most attractive. Not the least of its attractions to his mind is that it is not difficult of realization; it would not be in the New England of today, where the country village is often said, and sometimes with truth, to represent the survival of the unfittest.

He is not prepared to assert that Peterborough was ever this ideal community of Dr. Belknap, but he thinks it was never so near being such as in the first quarter of the present century. What was it that brought about the change that was plainly visible a few years later, and caused so many of the young people to seek new homes? Was it American restlessness? Was it the Scotch-Irish preference for the outposts of civilization? Was it that, the first richness of the soil being exhausted, the hard conditions under which they must earn a living in New England had become apparent, and they desired to better themselves?

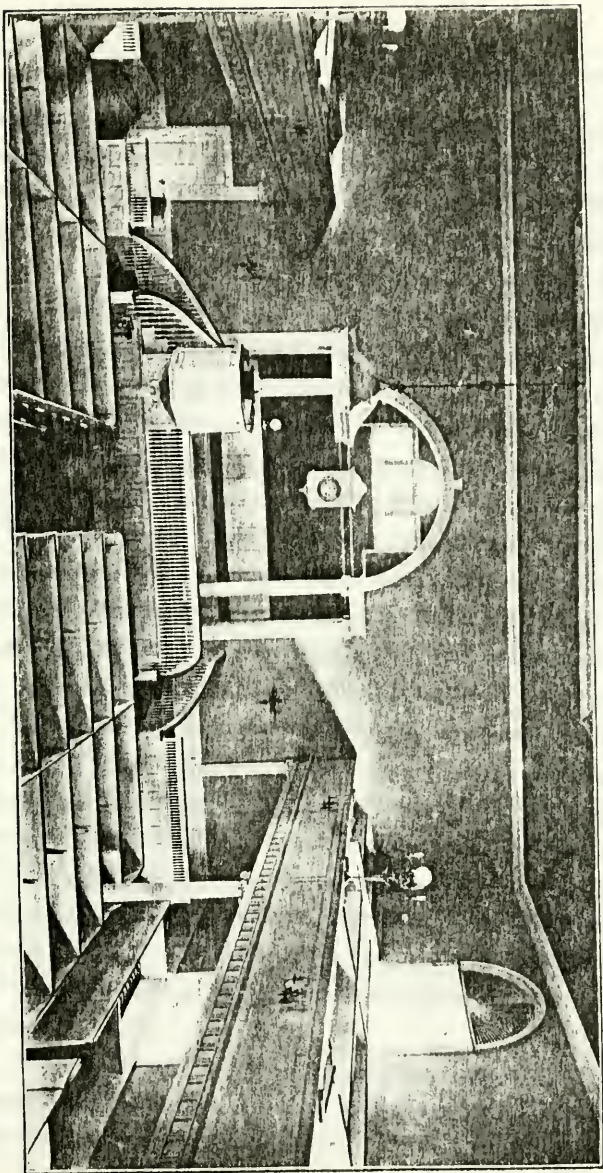




In 1831, Jonathan Smith's oldest son, Jonathan Smith, Jr., was practicing his profession at Bath; William, the second son, had for several years been engaged in trade at or near the centre of the town; John, the third son, and Jeremiah, the youngest, then a lad of sixteen years, were still at home, as were the two younger daughters. John had already accumulated some money in buying woodland and clearing it of the wood. The new states bordering on the Mississippi were in process of settlement, and presented very flattering inducements to young men of energy and ambition. Many were seeking new homes there. Some had already gone from Peterborough; others were seriously considering the question of going, among them William Smith, Captain Timothy Fox, his brother-in-law, and several of the cousins. Jonathan Smith discovered that John was strongly inclined to join them, and it was then that he told him he had always intended him to do what he himself had done forty years before, viz: stay at home, take the farm and care for his parents in their old age. With some reluctance, John finally agreed to do so.

There is something pathetic in this act of the son in surrendering his own ambition to his parents' wishes. It required a strong sense of duty and great self-denial in a young man of industry, energy, and some capital, ambitious to avail himself of the op-





INSIDE VIEW OF CHURCH, IN 1900.



portunities which the West then presented of making for himself a place and a name, to waive them all for the sake of caring for his parents in their old age. It is a story common to many New England homes. Those who went achieved not always success, but it was the rule and not the exception; those who staid behind had not always failure for their portion, but it was likewise the rule and not the exception; and where the rule holds good in both cases the story has some elements of tragedy. The son's decision meant far more to him than he knew. With his mental traits and temper, life on a New Hampshire farm was the very last he should have chosen. Probably he realized this later in life; at any rate, those nearest him did. In his later years he sometimes spoke not without a tinge of sadness of the different lot that might have been his could he have carried out his wish to go away. The hard labor and circumscribed life of the New England farmer, while they never dulled his moral sensibilities or made him sour or misanthropic, did slowly wither his natural energy and ambition, and did change him materially in other ways. For his great self-sacrifice his children fondly believe he has his reward.

He stipulated that before taking charge of the homestead he should go on a journey to the West to see the land he had renounced. This was assented



to, and the following summer (1832), in company with James Walker, he set out. He visited Cincinnati, St. Louis, Montebello and various other places, travelling wholly by stage coach, and returning by way of Buffalo and the Erie Canal. Upon his return the farm was formally made over to him. The agreement was that he should have a conveyance of one-half of the home farm, which included what was left of the Cady lot, making one hundred and seventy-three acres. The deed is dated December 25, 1833, and the consideration is fifteen hundred dollars, the same as that named in the deed Jonathan Smith had received from his father forty-two years before. In this case, as in that, it is probable that no money passed between father and son, although the latter could have paid had it been required. Nancy Smith did not release her dower.

Jonathan Smith was now free from all care, but he occupied himself in various ways. Before and after the conveyance of his farm to his son, he settled many estates in the Probate Court. His advice and assistance were still sought by his neighbors in their business ventures, and both were rendered with the tact and good sense which had distinguished him all his life long. The interests of the church still continued uppermost with him. He gave to his church all the time and service it would receive from him until the end.





Only once after his retirement was he called upon to take part in any public function, and that was at the centennial of 1839. He was chosen president of the day, and the success of the celebration was owing in no small degree to the tact and good judgment with which he discharged the duties of the position. He felt the responsibility keenly, and his anxiety disturbed his sleep for many nights before the eventful day. But his fellow-citizens had long since found him out and did not share his fears. When the day came he performed the duties of presiding officer with dignity and efficiency. His speech at the opening of the exercises is brief, but singularly happy, and we give it here entire. It was in response to the following toast:

“The memory of the early settlers of Peterborough: Let us not forget the perils and hardships they endured while we are enjoying in peace and plenty the fruits of their labors.”

RESPONSE.

The sentiment just read relates to the sufferings and hardships of our fathers in their first settlement in this place. The orator of the day has related many incidents of the perils they endured, yet the half has not been told. I well recollect many of the meetings of the first settlers at my father's house and elsewhere, when they used to relate the privations, hardships and dangers of their first settlement; and it seemed as if they were enough to break down their spirits and cast a gloom over every countenance. Was it so? No. Notwithstanding all they



suffered and all they feared, there was a joyful countenance—there was more mirth, pleasantry, wit and humor at that time than at the present. There was another good thing attending these meetings: there was more friendship toward one another, more acts of kindness in relieving each other in their distress. The singing of the old Scotch songs generally closed these meetings.

In truth, their lives were soldiers' lives, though they were not so well fed or clothed. These scenes and trials admirably fitted them for brave and hardy soldiers to fight our battles and gain our independence. If the times and conditions of the country raised up men eminently qualified to lead our armies, no less did they raise up soldiers, making them patient of suffering, persevering, and confident of success. Had it not been for this, we have no reason to believe that we should have gained our independence. Now shall their sons, well clothed and fed and at their ease, lose what their fathers gained? I hope not; but that the same Divine Hand that so abundantly sustained and cherished their fathers in attaining will also qualify them to keep and improve the blessings they enjoy, and that another century from this will find a people here improved in all knowledge and virtue and every moral principle, so that our independence will be preserved to the latest ages.

Jonathan Smith died August 29, 1842, of typhoid fever, after an illness of only seven days. The year was a fatal one for his family. His brother Samuel died April 25th, aged seventy-five years; his brother James, August 11th, at Cavendish, Vermont, aged eighty-six years; and his eminent brother, Jeremiah, October 21st, at Dover, New Hampshire, aged eighty-two years.



Up to his last illness he was in full enjoyment of his mental and physical powers. His health had always been good, and his mental powers, which were long in maturing, remained clear and bright, permitting him to enjoy to the utmost the privileges and opportunities of a ripe old age.

His estate was never settled in the Probate Court, and it is not known whether he left any property beside his half interest in the home place. Four years after his death his other children quitclaimed their interest in it to his son John, and thus the title was again united in his family successor at the old homestead.

No portrait of him exists, but we know something of his personal appearance from those now living who remember him. He was a broad-shouldered, well built man, thinner than some of his brothers, about six feet in height, and from one hundred and ninety to two hundred pounds in weight. His eyes were gray and his hair dark brown. After middle life his hair turned white and grew thin on the top of his head, but he was never bald. He greatly resembled his elder brother Jeremiah, but he was not so fine-looking as the Judge. In his old age he had more the manner and bearing of a retired professional man than a New England farmer. His form and carriage were erect to the last and showed few of the withering effects of age. He always carried



a cane, and some now living recall him and it as inseparable companions. In summing up his character, one who knew him well has thus described him:

His knowledge was not very general, though he was a great reader, and on some subjects remarkably well informed. His reading had been largely of a theological character, and on this subject few were so intelligent as he. He was always ready to defend his faith, and could give his reasons for it with clearness and force. He was a man of kindly affections and feelings, rather more ready to forgive an injury than to forget it."

He was known throughout the town as "Deacon Smith," as was his son John after him. He was gentle and dignified in manner, fond of children, and in his latter years a great favorite with them. His cheerful, genial ways and talk captivated them, and it was always a privilege to them to be admitted to his room. He often made their cause his own. He never lost his fondness for music, and sang the hymns of his church with zeal and fervor down to his latest days. His wife joined him in singing, and one of their favorites was the Portuguese Hymn. In disposition, he was retiring and modest, never putting himself forward in public affairs. He was one of those rare men who seem to live in constant fear lest people find them out, and though in the course of his life he filled nearly every important office in town, and some of them many times, yet they all





came to him unsolicited. His whole life was seemingly governed and directed by the pledges of his church covenant, which he gave in early manhood, and in which are prescribed the duties of a sincere church member to his family, to his neighbors and to the world. In the words of the one above cited, "He was a good man; good without pretension and without ostentation. He lived and died on the spot where he was born. He went down to his grave like a shock of corn fully ripe, with as pure and upright a character as falls to the lot of few mortals here below."

*Finis vitae.*



## APPENDIX.

### I.

In these pages the old home has been often spoken of as "Elm Hill." The origin of this appellation is worth preserving. In the fall of 1859, a granddaughter of Jonathan Smith, and living at the place, was a student at the village academy. She had assigned to her for an exercise in English the writing of a composition, and she chose for her subject, "The Autobiography of a Cat," one of her pets. "What name shall I call the cat's home?" she asked of her mother, who was helping her through the troublesome exercise. "Call it 'Elm Hill,'" was her mother's reply. The aptness of the name was immediately recognized by the family, and they always spoke of their home as "Elm Hill" afterwards.



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